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STRENGTHENING COOPERATION WITHIN THE ECE REGION: OPERATIONAL ACTIVITIES AND COOPERATION WITH REGIONAL/SUBREGIONAL GROUPINGS, INITIATIVES AND ORGANIZATIONS

Note by the Executive Secretary

• It is encouraging that financial or in kind contributions have been received for a few major individual projects and contributors have to be thanked. Nevertheless, there is an increasing need for Governments of ECE member States to explore possibilities for providing additional financing in support of various types of activities (advisory missions, seminars, training workshops) enabling countries in transition to implement the norms and standards adopted by the ECE. Contributions to TFACT are a major tool for carrying out these types of activities, thereby responding in a flexible manner to evolving new needs. Additional funding is also needed for developing projects within the framework of sub-regional groupings and initiatives, in particular the Southeast European Cooperative Initiative (SECI); the Special Programme for the Economies of Central Asia (SPECA).

• The Commission may wish to request each PSB to look at the operational activities undertaken within its field of competence and mandate and to provide its views on the directions they should take. A synthesis of the conclusions of each PSB's review would be prepared for the Commission's consideration at its fifty-fifth session, which could enable the Commission to provide further guidance for the technical assistance programme and its financing.

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INTRODUCTION

1. At its fifty-third session, the Commission requested the secretariat to continue to respond in a balanced manner to requests for technical assistance. While recognizing the benefits of responding to demands emanating from subregional groupings or initiatives, given the multiplier effect and the limited resources available, attention should continue to be given to the needs of individual countries. The selection of projects, whether emanating from sub-regions or from individual countries, should be based on their value-added and merit. Particular attention should be paid to countries which do not benefit sufficiently from other programmes of technical assistance. The secretariat has paid due attention to all these requests and considered them as guiding principles in carrying out its operational activities.

2. The form and methods of operational activities vary according to the needs of the recipient countries and sub-regions. They may involve: preparation and implementation of specific programmes, both issue- and sub-region-oriented; preparation of project proposals; preparation of case studies, surveys and substantive documents; organization of workshops, seminars, conferences and other expert group meetings; substantive participation in meetings organized by other international organizations and national authorities; collection and dissemination of statistical data and information, using in particular the World Wide Web; consultative and advisory missions; study tours and training programmes, etc.

3. Operational activities are carried out in many cases in close cooperation with other United Nations bodies and international and national organizations.

4. Tables 1 and 2 (see E/ECE/1368/Add.1) contain specific information on the activities of the Regional Advisers and provide a list of workshops, seminars, study tours and training courses organized since March 1998 or already planned to be organized in the future. These include events organized directly by ECE and those to which ECE has contributed or given support. Table 3 (see E/ECE/1368/Add.1) summarizes operational activities undertaken for subregional groupings/special initiatives/programmes.

I. COOPERATION WITH SUBREGIONAL ORGANIZATIONS AND INITIATIVES

5. At its last session, the Commission expressed its appreciation of the effective cooperation and dialogue that had been established with sub-regional organizations and initiatives and requested that such cooperation continue to be strengthened. In response to this request, in the course of 1998, operational activities carried out in cooperation with, or in the framework of, sub-regional organizations or initiatives have been intensified and include the exchange of information, provision of expertise within available resources, and joint organization and support of these activities. Some

specific details of ECE's cooperation with these entities are given in Table 3.

6. A Cooperation Agreement between ECE and the **Central European Initiative** (CEI) was signed in May 1998. This Agreement provides a mechanism for the implementation of the CEI/ECE Cooperation Programme: a focal point within the secretariat financed by the Secretariat for CEI Projects at the EBRD was appointed in October 1998. A CEI Project Opportunity Methodology, outlining the procedures for documenting project ideas and opportunities and submitting project proposals to the EBRD and other international institutions, has been jointly developed. Ten project proposals have already been prepared.

7. The ECE provided a substantial contribution to the organization of the CEI Summit Economic Forum (Zagreb, November 1998) including a study on "Economic Disparities in Central and Eastern Europe and the Impact of EU Enlargement". A discussion paper on the preparation of the strategy and programme for the CEI Working Group on SMEs was prepared and a seminar on the role of Governments in enterprise creation and support to SMEs was organized jointly with the CEI Executive Secretariat in Italy in September 1998.

8. Cooperation with the **Interstate Economic Committee of the Economic Union of the Commonwealth of Independent States** (CIS) has continued, although organizational restructuring at the two bodies limited the extent of cooperation in 1998. Discussions with the Executive Secretary of the CIS have confirmed that the substance and scope of cooperation need constant adjustment to reflect both socio-economic and political realities in the CIS member countries.

9. The Interstate Eurasian Coal and Metals Community of the CIS has been interacting with ECE on the issues of restructuring the coal mining sector and protection of the environment in CIS countries. Its initiatives on the use of methane gas in coal mines for energy production hold out good prospects for solving important socio-economic, technical and environmental problems and have the potential for replication in other countries. Other areas of cooperation include energy efficiency and security in CIS countries and the preparation of the 2000 round of censuses together with the Interstate Statistical Committee.

10. At a summit meeting in Yalta in June 1998 the Heads of State and Delegates of participating Governments signed the Charter of the **Black Sea Economic Cooperation** (BSEC), thereby transforming the existing intergovernmental mechanism into a fully fledged economic organization with eleven member States. Cooperation with BSEC during the period under review has been particularly fruitful on issues related to SMEs and energy. Three workshops on SME-related topics were organized jointly by ECE and BSEC with

financial support from the Konrad Adenauer Foundation in Romania (May 1998), Republic of Moldova (November 1998) and Armenia (March 1999). Two further workshops in this area are planned to be held in Turkey and the Russian Federation in the autumn. ECE developed a network of SME focal points for the BSEC countries which was published by the BSEC secretariat in 1998.

11. A review of the development of Energy Efficiency Demonstration Zones in BSEC countries and financial mechanisms for energy efficiency projects in these zones was prepared and proposed to the BSEC secretariat as background material for a workshop on the subject to be organized jointly by the ECE and BSEC secretariats.

12. The Executive Secretary will address an International Round Table, "The Black Sea Economic Cooperation in the Turn of the 21st Century", to be held in Tbilisi on 9-10 March 1999. His presentation will focus on Economic Trends and Challenges in the Black Sea Region and is intended to contribute to the establishment of the agenda for the future economic strategy of the Region.

13. Substantial technical assistance has been provided to the **Southeast European Cooperative Initiative** (SECI) in helping it to perform its mandate of encouraging cooperation among the countries of the region and facilitating the access of southeast Europe to European integration.

14. In addition to the seven on-going projects being implemented, two more were added during the period under review: cooperation among security markets; and combatting cross-border crime and corruption. The work of all these projects is at different stages of implementation and has been reviewed by various ad hoc project groups and the Agenda Committee. ECE's contribution to the implementation of the projects consisted of the following activities: preparation of project outlines for the Agenda Committee; further elaboration of these outlines for meetings of the working groups; securing the cooperation of other UN bodies and agencies as requested by the Coordinator; provision of advisory services and organization of workshops within available resources; regular consultations with the Coordinator and direct reporting to the Agenda Committee.

15. The decision-making body of the Southeast European Cooperative Initiative (SECI) is the Agenda Committee, comprising high ranking government officials from each of the eleven participating States who act as SECI national coordinators. At its tenth meeting, held at the Palais des Nations on 1 February 1999, the Agenda Committee favourably reviewed the progress achieved within the SECI framework and agreed to continue the Initiative for another two years. Delegates noted that SECI projects set reasonably ambitious objectives and focused on achieving near-term results, which they felt contributed to the Initiative's success. The Agenda Committee also

welcomed the explicit support given by the EU, EC and the Russian Federation as well as the decision by the Economic Commission for Europe to complement its existing technical support to SECI projects by appointing country focal points in the secretariat to help with the exchange of information about developments in the different SECI project activities.

16. In March 1998, the Presidents of Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, Uzbekistan and Tajikistan, and the Executive Secretaries of ECE and ESCAP signed the Tashkent Declaration on the United Nations **Special Programme for the Economies of Central Asia** (SPECA). In September 1998, Turkmenistan officially informed ECE of its decision to join the Programme and the Tashkent Declaration. SPECA participants still have to adopt officially the SPECA concept paper at the level of Heads of Government and to hold the SPECA public presentation meeting.

17. Since the adoption of the Tashkent Declaration, the established lead countries in coordination with ECE and ESCAP have been working on forming Project Working Groups (PWGs) and preparing background "diagnostic" papers for the first meetings of the PWGs. ECE experts, in coordination with ESCAP, have contributed to the first sessions of the PWGs on transport infrastructure and border crossing facilitation (Almaty, October 1998) and on rational and efficient use of the energy and water resources of Central Asia (Bishkek, November 1998). Preparatory work for the sessions of PWGs with the lead countries of Tajikistan (international economic conference), Turkmenistan (regional cooperation in developing a multi-choice approach to hydrocarbon supply routes through pipelines to world markets) and Uzbekistan (subject not yet decided) has been going on. It is expected that the finalization of the organizational arrangements for SPECA will give an impetus to this work.

18. The Programme provides for substantial resource mobilization of the participating countries. It also counts on the resources from private and public sector and organizations, from supporting and other countries. In view of the current economic situation in the participating countries, one can hardly overestimate the importance of external support to SPECA. In fact, the role of the supporting States is crucial as they will be called upon to provide intellectual, organizational and financial assistance. Indications of interest and support, in particular from OSCE member countries, have been very promising, and the ECE secretariat will work to channel this support and make it coordinated.

19. SPECA is widely considered as a contribution to a more democratic, economically better off and more stable world and as such strongly deserving of political and material support from other member countries. ECE experts are promoting such a view and working for this vision to materialize. They

encourage SPECA countries to mobilize their own resources and to invite their main economic partners to contribute to SPECA as supporting States.

II. COOPERATION IN THE MEDITERRANEAN REGION

20. ECE recognizes the specific problems of the countries of the Mediterranean area which comprise developing countries, economies in transition and advanced market economies. These problems include air and water pollution, water management, energy supply and consumption, transport and trade relations and are addressed both through ECE's regular programme and its operational activities.

21. In cooperation with gas companies of Italy and Turkey, ECE organized the Mediterranean Gas Conference in Istanbul in April 1998. Preparations are under way for the next "Mediterranean Gas Conference: Preparing for the Next Era" to be held in Palermo, Italy on 13-14 April 1999. ECE has continued to support the activities of the Western Mediterranean Transport Study Centre (CETMO)and the Eastern Mediterranean Transport Study Centre (TRANSCEM) in carrying out research on the development of transport infrastructures in the Mediterranean area. A project proposal for the organization of a workshop on "Information in Research and Development Activities - Obstacles and Problems" in 1999 was prepared and transmitted to the Malta Council for Science and Technology (MCST). The proposal was welcomed by the Maltese authorities and a final decision is expected to be taken soon.

22. At its last session, the Commission requested the intensification of attention paid to the specific circumstances of the Mediterranean countries.

- ECE's efforts have very often failed because of lack of financial resources for organizing events or projects of interest to countries of the Mediterranean region. These countries may wish to mobilize funds for this kind of activities which would enable them to benefit from ECE's expertise and neutrality.

- The Mediterranean region includes countries which are not members of ECE. Some of them have been successfully involved in ECE events or projects. It is therefore suggested that efforts be made to strengthen their participation in similar activities in the future.

III. PROBLEMS AND FUTURE WORK ORIENTATIONS

23. For unexpected reasons, ECE has witnessed a diminishing level of resources with respect to funding and staffing for the Regional Advisory programme in 1999(Section 21 of the programme budget). Consequently, the activities of the Regional Advisers have been considerably reduced between 1998 and 1999 and it will not be possible to satisfy all requests from

Governments. The Regional Advisors play a pivotal role in advising and helping the countries in transition to apply ECE norms, standards and conventions and contribute to an increased awareness of the importance of institution building. Therefore support from member States to come back to at least the previous level of Section 21 of the ECE budget would be welcome.

24. Some substantial extra-budgetary financial means have been provided to support both substantive and operational activities in specific areas of ECE's work: UN/EDIFACT; industrial structural change and development; trade finance and investment for the Russian timber sector; TIR Convention; TER, TEM and TINA/TEM Projects; SECI; Environmental Performance Reviews; Implementation of the Convention on Long-range Transboundary Air Pollution (EMEP); Energy Efficiency 2000 Project; promotion and development of a market-based gas industry in economies in transition. Financial support was also given by the private sector, in particular for gas and energy efficiency projects. A positive response was received from the Konrad Adenauer Foundation to participate financially in the organization of selected workshops in the future. The United Nations Fund for International Partnerships (UNFIP) has recently committed to provide funds of up to US$ 2 million for a three-year ECE Energy Efficiency Investment Project that will enhance the energy efficiency, infrastructure and capacity of five east European and CIS countries (Belarus, Bulgaria, Kazakhstan, Russian Federation and Ukraine) which have signed the UN Framework Convention on climate change.

25. In addition to the above, there is an increasing need of funding for a variety of activities which are not very costly but which play an important role in supporting the effective implementation of the normative work of the ECE through individual advisory missions, seminars and training workshops for groups of countries in transition. TFACT is the Trust Fund established for this purpose and should be increased in view of the above.

26. In major areas of ECE's work, the direction of operational activities for the forthcoming twelve months are as follows:

(a) In the field of transport, in addition to the further development of the TEM and TER projects the emphasis will be on the assessment of regulatory and infra-structural items in the inland transport sector.

(b) In order to establish a coherent assistance programme by country in its domain, the Committee for Trade, Industry and Enterprise Development would like to nominate focal points for trade, industry and enterprise development in all the countries with economies in transition, especially for the CIS. These focal points could be based in already existing agencies such as investment promotion agencies, the PRO committees for trade facilitation, export promotion agencies, intellectual property offices, and enterprise development institutes. It is expected that the resources needed to

facilitate meetings between the secretariat and these focal points will be available.

(c) Some major new operational activities in environment are related to an up-coming Protocol to the ECE Water Convention and to the Aarhus Convention on Public Participation. The Protocol on Water and Health will be open for signature at the Ministerial Conference "Environment and Health" in London in June 1999. Preparations for some pilot projects for early implementation of the Protocol are being prepared in cooperation with a number of countries in central and eastern Europe. The signatories to the Aarhus Convention will convene a meeting in the Republic of Moldova in April 1999 and agree on a work plan which will include various activities on capacity building and guidance for early implementation of the Convention.

(d) The most pressing concern of nearly all statistical offices in countries in transition is the 2000 round of population censuses. Their need for a census is, for many reasons, greater than the needs of other countries but they are very short of funds to do the work and are also in need of technical support. The ECE has been providing assistance for some time now mainly through UNDP/UNFPA funded projects and expects to do so, in cooperation with other institutions, during the coming year and longer.

(e) High priority will be given to supporting the collection, analysis and dissemination of accurate and comprehensive timber data regarding forest resources in the region as well as timber production and trends regarding the marketing forest products;

(f) In the field of energy, which remains the top priority for many countries in transition, it will be necessary to concentrate the activities of the Regional Adviser on Sustainable Energy on a limited number of countries taking into account their development priorities and governmental support regarding cooperation with ECE in each priority area.

(g) ECE has made greater use of the latest information technologies which create new opportunities for the efficient and rapid exchange of information and ideas and, in part, may compensate for a country's absence at a given meeting. To this end, Internet WWW sites have been created where extensive information on ECE's operational activities in various fields can be found. The application of the ECE WebSite will certainly help to increase access to, and thus the effectiveness of, ECE activities and deserves, therefore, further development. The Governments of countries in need of technical assistance should make every effort to invest in new information technologies so that they can gain the maximum benefit from ECE activities.

IV. CONCLUSION

27. Even though efforts are being made to utilize existing resources efficiently, there is still an increasing need to explore possibilities for the additional financing of ECE operational activities. In response to the pressing needs and increasing number of requests for technical assistance from many ECE member States, and in order to maximize the impact of its technical assistance, the Commission may also wish to request each PSB to look at the operational activities undertaken within its field of competence and mandate and to provide its views on the directions they should take. The review by PSBs could cover the activities of the Regional Advisers, activities undertaken in cooperation with other institutions, the private sector and NGOs, as appropriate. A synthesis of the conclusions of each PSB's review would be prepared for the Commission's consideration at its fifty-fifth session, which could enable to Commission to provide further guidance for the technical assistance programme and its financing.

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Note by the Executive Secretary

- This note supplements the information contained in document E/ECE/1368.

- Tables 1 and 2 specific information on the activities of the Regional Advisers and provide a list of workshops, seminars, study tours and training courses organized since March 1998 or already planned to be organized in the future. These include events organized directly by ECE and those to which ECE has contributed or given support.

- Table 3 summarizes operational activities undertaken for subregional groupings/special initiatives/programmes.

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Table 1. Activities of regional advisers

Country visited	Purpose
	ENERGY
Belarus	- To launch an ECE/UNDP project on sustainable forestry management and reduction of adverse environmental impact by the utilisation of wood residue resources for production of heat power, Minsk, 9-13 March, 1998 - To implement the ECE/UNDP project on the utilisation of wood residue resources for production of heat power, Minsk, 6-17 July 1998 - To attend the 3rd Belorussian Energy and Ecology Congress and to implement the project on the utilisation of wood residue resources for production of heat power, Minsk, 28-30 October 1998
Bosnia and Herzegovina	- To service the 3rd SECI PWG meeting on interconnection of natural gas networks, Sarajevo, 17-19 May 1998
Italy	- To attend International Forum on Energy Security in the Third Millennium, Como, 14-16 May 1998
Kyrgyzstan	- To participate in the 1st SPECA meeting of experts and 1st meeting of SPECA PWG, Bishkek, 17-23 November 1998
Russian Federation	- To participate in the Conference and business consultative meeting on Russia and other CIS countries' energy potential, and consultations in CIS Interstate Economic Committee, Moscow, 31 March-2 April 1998 - To select energy efficiency projects in the Russian Federation for implementation with Norwegian support, St.Petersburg, Moscow, 2-6 June 1998 - To prepare and service the Workshop on Energy Efficiency and Security in CIS Countries, Moscow, 23 September-3 October 1998 - To conduct training course on financial engineering for energy efficiency projects, to prepare Energy Efficiency Demonstration Zones for Chuvashya and draft report for CIS project, Moscow, Nizhny Novgorod, Cheboksary, 29 November-9 December 1998
Slovenia	- To service the 3rd SECI PG meeting on Energy Efficiency Demonstration Zone Network in South-Eastern Europe, Maribor, 12 June 1998

Country visited	Purpose
Ukraine	- To negotiate with Governmental officials on implementation of Energy Efficiency projects in Ukraine and to assist local experts to prepare project proposals, Kiev, Zaporozhie, Nikolaev, Simferopol, 12-24 October 1998
ENVIRONMENT	
Austria	- To participate in the NATO-CCMS Workshop on Environment and Security in an International Context, Vienna, 23-24 March 1998 - To participate in the SECI Project Group on rivers, lakes, seas, Vienna, 22 October 1998
Belgium	- To participate in the SECI Danube recovery project group and consult with EC representatives on cooperation with PHARE and TACIS, Brussels, 16-17 April 1998
Bosnia and Herzegovina	- Consultations with environmental and water authorities, 25-27 October 1998
China	- To contribute to the Conference on Sustainable Development, Urumqi, 12-18 September 1998
Croatia	- To prepare a project on best agricultural practices under the ECE Water Convention and deliver a lecture, Zagreb, 24-27 March 1998 - Consultations on ECE Water Convention, Zagreb, 11-12 May 1998 - To deliver a lecture on sustainable transboundary management of water, Dubrovnik, 13-15 May 1998 - Preparation of project proposal on best agricultural practices, advisory consultations on environmental aspects of national energy strategy and preparation of the Congress on Energy and Environment, Rijeka, 1-5 July 1998 - Consultations on the project proposal on good agricultural practice, Zagreb, 23 October 1998 - Facilitation of the sub-regional congress on Energy and Environment and workshop on land-based pollution, Opatija, 28-30 October 1998 - To prepare projects under 1997-2000 work-plan and a SECI project on reconstruction and development of Croatia, Zagreb, 4-5 December 1998
Estonia	- To attend inaugural meeting of the Estonian-Russian bilateral commission on transboundary waters and to prepare an International Conference on pollution of international lakes, Tallinn, 1-5 April 1998

Country visited	Purpose
Finland	- Consultations with the Bureau member of the ECE Water Convention, Helsinki, 7-8 July 1998
France	- To participate in the Sub-Committee on Environment of the Council of Europe, Strasbourg, 22 April 1998
Hungary	- To work on the preparation of a project proposal for laboratory quality management under the ECE Water Convention, Budapest, 20-21 July 1998 - To attend the meeting of the Working Group on Water, 23-27 September 1998 - To participate in the legal Task Force under the ECE Water Convention, to prepare protocol on Water and Health, Budapest, 1-4 December 1998
Kazakhstan	- To attend the Conference of Ministers of Environment of Central Asian countries and consultations, Almaty, 21-26 April 1998
Kyrgyzstan	- To prepare the first meeting of SPECA PG on water and energy, Bishkek, 9-10 September 1998 - To participate in SPECA expert consultations and PG on energy and water, Bishkek, 18-21 November 1998
Netherlands	- To participate in the Bureau Meeting of the Water Convention and to participate in the Workshop on equating water laboratory work, Laleystad, 23-26 April 1998 - To prepare arrangements between the Meeting of the Parties to the ECE Water Convention and Water Forum 2000, and to discuss environmental contributions to EU Conference on Biological Farming, The Hague, 27-28 August 1998 - To participate in the Delta Conference, Amsterdam, 23-27 November 1998
United Kingdom	- To participate as invited speaker in the Seminar on Water Problems and to have discussion on project on legal advisory service under the ECE Water Convention, Dundee, 8-14 June 1998
United States of America	- To participate in the meeting with GEF on structured cooperation with the ECE Water Convention, Washington, 7-11 November 1998 - Consultations with UNDP on common activities in the ECE region, 11 November 1998

Country visited	Purpose
Uzbekistan	- To attend the session of the sustainable development committee for Aral Sea region, Tashkent, 18-20 May 1998 - To deliver a keynote speech to OSCE Seminar on Water, Tashkent, 19-23 September 1998
STATISTICS	
Austria	- To participate in and service the joint consultations on the European Comparison Programme, Vienna, 3-5 June 1998
Bulgaria	- Consultations with Bulgarian Statistical Office on capital stock estimation and related national accounts matters, Sofia, 26-29 October 1998
China	- To assist in handling an OECD workshop on the implementation of the 1993 SNA and present a paper on the treatment of inventories and capital gains in national accounts, Beijing, 12-16 October 1998
France	- To service the Special Session at the Conference of European Statisticians and to attend a meeting of the IMF Steering Committee on Ukraine, Paris, 18-20 May 1998 - To participate in the joint OECD/Eurostat/ECE meeting on linking CIS countries to the rest of Europe in the European Comparison Programme, Paris, 15 July 1998 - To participate in the OECD meeting on national accounts, meeting on ECP and special session for transition countries, Paris, 22-25 September 1998 - To participate in the 2nd meeting of the Canberra Group on Capital Stock Statistics and to attend OECD meeting on environmental accounting, Paris, 28 Sept.-1 Oct. 1998
Luxembourg	- To attend the meeting of the Steering Group on EU Statistical Cooperation with NIS and Mongolia, and to have consultations with members of Eurostat, Luxembourg, 3-4 March 1998 - To participate in the Eurostat Working Group on Harmonization of Consumer Price Indices, and Special session for Eurostat "candidate" countries in Eastern Europe, Luxembourg, 11-13 May 1998
Kyrgyzstan	- Consultations with officials of the National Statistical Office on national accounts and the hidden economy, Bishkek, 31 March-5 April 1998
Portugal	- To participate in the Eurostat meeting on purchasing power parities, Lisbon, 6-7 May 1998

Country visited	Purpose
Russian Federation	- Consultations with Goskomstat and CIS Office on capital stock estimation and related national accounts matters, Moscow, 3-6 November 1998
United States of America	- To attend Brookings Institution meeting on price indices for insurance and meeting of US Bureau of Labour Statistics International Working Group on price indices, Washington, 21-24 April 1998 - To present a paper on the measurement of the output of banks and similar financial institutions at a Brookings Institution workshop, Washington, 20 November 1998
TRADE	
Albania	- To attend meeting of the SECI Business Advisory Council, Tirana, 26-27 May 1998
Austria	- To attend 7th session of the Commission on Crime Prevention and Criminal Justice, Vienna, 21-30 April 1998 - To attend SECI Consultative meeting, Salzburg, 27-29 July 1998
Belarus	- To prepare with Belarus Ministries a project for UN/ECE BOT Group and to participate in the CIS meeting on standards, Minsk, 9-12 November 1998
Belgium	- To attend SECI meetings on Border Crossing Facilitation and on Danube Recovery, Brussels, 16-17 April 1998 - To attend 3rd meeting of the CEPS Working Party and to visit sponsors to ECE Forum on Intellectual Property Rights, Brussels, 4-5 May 1998 - To attend the EC/ECE meeting on the SECI Border Crossing project, Brussels, 14 October 1998
Bulgaria	- To prepare for a mission and conference of the BOT Group to advise the Government on matters relating to Public Private Partnerships in Infrastructure, Sofia, 15-17 April 1998 - To attend INTERCARGO'98 Conference, Sofia, 27 April 1998 - To attend SECI Business Advisory Council meeting, Sofia, 14-16 September 1998 - To attend BOT Seminar at Bulgarian Investment Forum and the SECI meeting on Stock Exchange, Sofia, 11-15 October 1998
Croatia	- To attend and make two presentations to the CEI Summit Economic Forum, Zagreb, 18-21 November 1998

Country visited	Purpose
Czech Republic	- To attend the Coordination meeting on the Trade Facilitation, Prague, 4 May 1998 - To participate in the 6th OSCE Economic Forum, Prague, 3-5 June 1998 - To attend ECE meeting on Revising the European Convention on International Commercial Arbitration, Prague, 28-29 Sept. 1998
Estonia	- To participate in the Seminar on the Privatisation of Public Utilities, Tallinn, 15 May 1998
Greece	- To participate in the SECI Border Crossing meeting, Thessaloniki, 19-20 March 1998 - To attend the SECI Business Advisory Council meeting, Thessaloniki, 29-30 March 1998 - To participate in the meeting of the Royaumont Process on Stability, Athens, 31 March-1 April 1998 - To attend SECI Border Crossing meeting, Corfu, 29 May 1998 - To attend the inauguration of the Greek national trade facilitation body, Athens, 29 June 1998 - To attend SECI PWG on border crossing, Crete, 1-3 October 1998
Iran	- To attend the Asian EDIFACT Board meeting and EDICOM Conference, Tehran, 7-10 July 1998 - To participate in the Training Seminar on Trade Facilitation, Tehran, 7-10 November 1998
Kazakhstan	- To attend SPECA PG meeting on transport, Almaty, 19-22 October 1998
Latvia	- To prepare a visit of UN/ECE REAG to Latvia at the request of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Riga, 23-25 March 1998
Romania	- To discuss SECI Project on Crime and Corruption, Bucharest, 6 May 1998
Slovenia	- To participate in the Conference on Electronic Commerce, Bled, 7-10 June 1998
Turkey	- To attend OECD Forum on Entrepreneurship and Enterprise Development, Istanbul, 17-19 March 1998 - To attend the meeting on trade facilitation, Istanbul, 8-9 October 1998

Country visited	Purpose
United Kingdom	- To prepare ECE Forum on Intellectual Property Rights with WP.5 Chairman, London, 20 March 1998 - To attend meeting of ECE BOT Group with EBRD to discuss sponsorship by EBRD of BOT Group's work, London, 6 April 1998 - To prepare and launch Terre Initiative of the UN/ECE REAG Group, London, 17 July 1998 - To liaise with BOT Group members on sponsorship and have discussions with EBRD on Terre Initiative funding, 3-4 September 1998
United States of America	- To participate in SECI Coordinating meeting, Washington, 4 5 November 1998
TRANSPORT	
Austria	- To attend the 5th meeting of the TINA Steering Group, Baden, 23-24 March 1998
Belgium	- To participate in the preparatory meeting for St.Petersburg Inter-national Euro-Asian Conference on Transport, Brussels, 23 March 1998
Bosnia and Herzegovina	- To provide assistance to the Ministry of Civil Affairs and Communications in the field of transport infrastructure and facilities, Sarajevo, 19-20 March 1998
Hungary	- To discuss with TINA representatives TER project activities in Hungary, Budapest, 2-3 March 1998
Kazakhstan	- To attend the TRANSEURASIA'98 Conference and have discussions with the Ministry of Transport, Almaty, 19-21 May 1998 - To attend SPECA PWG on transport issues, Almaty, 18-22 October 1998
Lithuania	- To have the Government sign the TER Trust Fund Agreement and develop a programme of cooperation, Vilnius, 22-23 Oct. 1998
Poland	- To discuss with TINA representatives TEM project activities in Poland, Warsaw, 12-13 March 1998

Country visited	Purpose
Russian Federation	- To attend the 2nd International Transport Conference for the development of transport connections between Western Europe, Mediterranean and the Black Sea, Sochi, 2-3 April 1998 - To participate in the Steering Committee meeting on the St.Petersburg Conference on Transport, St.Petersburg, 17 April 1998 - Advisory mission to the Russian Federation, Moscow, 20-23 April 1998 - To attend International Euro-Asian Conference on Transport, St.Petersburg, 12-13 May 1998
Thailand	- To attend the 3rd meeting of RICAP Subcommittee on infrastructure development and the first session of the Committee on Transport, Communications, Tourism and Infrastructure Development, Bangkok, 17-20 November 1998
Turkey	- Discussions on Turkish and regional transport issues, Ankara, 8-9 September 1998
Turkmenistan	- To attend the International Road Federation Silk Road Conference, Ashgabat, 15-17 April 1998
COORDINATING UNIT FOR OPERATIONAL ACTIVITIES	
Austria	- To participate in International Conference on SME'98 Technology Days, Vienna, 3-4 December 1998
Belgium	- Participation in Donor's Committee Meeting on SMEs and on Financial Sector Development, Brussels, 3-5 March 1998 - To discuss possible cooperation with EC on ECE Regional Adviser's Programme on SMEs development, Brussels, 27-28 May 1998 - Participation in SECI Meeting on Financing SMEs, Brussels, 14-15 October 1998
Germany	- To participate in the first Economic Conference on Central Asia, Bonn, 5-6 November 1998
Hungary	- Participation in meeting PALOCLAND'98 on Crossboundary Cooperation, Salgotarjan, 21-23 April 1998
Italy	- To facilitate the Seminar on "The Role of Governments in Enterprise Creation and Support to SMEs", Potenza, 23-26 September 1998 - To develop project on Training of SME Trainers at the ILO Training Centre and European Training Foundation, Torino, 19-20 October 1998

Country visited	Purpose
Malta	- To discuss project proposal on a possible ECE workshop on information in R&D activities, and to participate in CSTD Working Group meeting on S&T partnership, Valletta, 28-30 September 1998
Republic of Moldova	- To discuss SECI project with the Ministries of Foreign Affairs and Economy and participate in BSEC workshop on SMEs - Their need for Financial and Human Resources, Chisinau, 17-21 November 1998
Kazakhstan	- To participate in the Subregional meeting of UNDP Resident Representatives, Almaty, 7 March 1998 - To discuss possible creation of SPECA Working Group on SME development, Almaty, Astana, 24-28 August 1998 - To participate in SPECA PG meeting, Almaty, 16-23 Oct. 1998
Kyrgyzstan	- To assist in the preparation for the 1st session of SPECA Project Working Group on Water and Energy, Bishkek, 14-16 September 1998 - To participate in SPECA PWG, Bishkek, 18-21 November 1998
Romania	- Participation in BSEC Workshop on SMEs and Entrepreneurship, Mangalia, 6-8 May 1998
Russian Federation	- Preparatory work for St.Petersburg Economic Forum, Moscow, 11-15 June 1998 - Substantive work for the Economic Forum, St.Petersburg, 16-20 June 1998 - To attend the World Economic Forum's special meeting on Russia, Moscow, 4-5 December 1998 - To participate in the Conference on the experience of restructuring in the coal mining sector, Mezhdurechensk, 26 December 1998
Slovenia	- To advise the Ministries of Economic Affairs and Small Business in elaboration of the new strategy of the CEI Working Group on SMEs, Ljubljana, Maribor, 7-9 September 1998
Tajikistan	- To collect information and discuss with Tajik authorities on the strategy for economic development within SPECA framework, Dushanbe, 5-12 January 1999

Country visited	Purpose
Turkey	- Participation in BSEC Expert Meeting on SMEs, Istanbul, 24-27 March 1998 - Participation in Forum on Entrepreneurship and Enterprise Development, Istanbul, 2-4 June 1998 - Participation in OECD Forum on Entrepreneurship and Enterprise Development, Istanbul, 8-10 December 1998
Ukraine	- Consultations on strategic issues of economic development at the Ministry of Economy, Kiev, 22-23 June 1998
Uzbekistan	- To participate in the SPECA Summit, Tashkent, 26 March 1998

Table 2. Workshops, seminars, training courses and study tours

Division	Title
ENERGY	Workshops/seminars 1. Conference on Mediterranean Gas at the Crossroads, Istanbul, Turkey, 21-22 April 1998 2. Seminar and study tour on clean coal technologies, United States of America, 27 April-9 May 1998 3. Workshop on power engineering and symposium on lighting engineering, Maribor, Slovenia, 12-14 May 1998 4. Joint ECE/EuroGeoSurveys seminar on practical implementation of UN Framework Classification of Reserves/Resources (UNFC) in EU member states, Brussels, Belgium, 17 May 1998 5. Seminar on restructuring of the coal industry and coal-fired power sector in economies in transition, Varna, Bulgaria, 25-27 May 1998 6. Conference on transport of natural gas in a liberalised European gas market, Bratislava, Slovakia, 26-27 May 1998 7. Joint EU/ECE workshop on energy efficiency standards and labels, Rome, Italy, 28 September 1998 8. First Workshop on energy efficiency and security in the CIS countries, Moscow, Russian Federation, 28-30 September 1998 9. Conference on reform and restructuring of the gas industry in economies in transition, Milan, Italy, 5 October 1998 10. Workshop on the Internet Energy Efficiency 2000 project Website, Geneva, 5-6 October 1998 11. Joint ECE/ESCAP seminar on implementation of the UN Framework Classification in Great Mekong sub-region, Bangkok, 15-16 October 1998 12. Workshop on harmonization of national regulations, standards and procedures for certification of equipment and materials used in the mining industry, Szczyrk, Poland, 15-17 Oct. 1998 13. Workshop on conservation of energy and resources, Minsk, Belarus, 28-30 November 1998 14. Workshop on energy efficiency in municipalities, Sofia, Bulgaria, 9-11 December 1998 15. Subregional seminar on UNFC in Indonesia and south-east Asia, Jakarta, Indonesia, 16-17 December 1998 16. Seminar on commercial bank financing of energy efficiency projects in central and eastern Europe, Prague, Czech Republic, 28-29 January 1999 17. Seminar on the implementation of EU Gas Directives, Szirak, Hungary, 1-3 March 1999 18. Joint EU/ECE workshop on energy efficiency standards and labels, Brussels, Belgium, 4-5 March 1999 19. Workshop on energy efficiency demonstration zones, Moscow, Russian Federation, 10-13 March 1999

Division	Title
ENERGY (cont.)	Planned: 20. The Mediterranean Gas Conference: Preparing for the Next Era, Palermo, Italy, 13-14 April 1999 21. Second Workshop on energy efficiency and security in the CIS countries, Moscow, Russian Federation, 22-23 April 1999 22. Workshop on power engineering and symposium on lighting engineering, Maribor, Slovenia, 12-14 May 1999 23. Symposium on energy savings, Riga, Latvia, May 1999 24. Seminar on gas contracting, Norway, May/June 1999 25. Seminar and study tour on clean coal technologies, Czech Republic, 3-5 June 1999 26. Conference on opening up of the gas and electricity markets in the ECE region, Prague, Czech Republic, 21-22 June 1999 27. Seminar on restructuring of the coal and thermal power sectors including the ecological aspects, Ustron, Poland, 14-16 October 1999 28. Workshop on energy efficiency demonstration zones in BSEC countries, Istanbul, Turkey, 1999 <u>Training courses</u> 1. Business planning and financial engineering, Nizhny Novgorod, Russian Federation, 20-23 April 1998 2. Financial engineering for Russian speaking energy efficiency demonstration zones managers, Nizhny Novgorod, Russian Federation, 30 Nov.-3 Dec. 1998 3. Financial engineering for managers involved in the implementation of energy efficiency projects, Korolev, Russian Federation, 8-11 February 1999 Planned: 4. Gas pricing, Groningen, Netherlands, 14-19 March 1999 5. Business planning and financial engineering, Katowice, Poland, June 1999
ENVIRONMENT	<u>Workshops/seminars</u> 1. Workshop on points of contact under Industrial Accidents Convention, Minsk, Belarus, 2-3 April 1998 2. Workshop on equating water laboratory work, Netherlands, Laleystad, 23-25 April 1998 3. Workshop on the prevention of chemical accidents and the limitation of their impact on transboundary waters, Berlin, Germany, 7-9 May 1998 4. Ninth CCE Workshop on mapping critical loads and levels, Kristiansand, Norway, 11-14 May 1998

Division	Title
ENVIRONMENT (cont.)	5. Workshop on the quantification of the effects of air pollution on materials, Berlin, Germany, 25-27 May 1998 6. Subregional Workshop on land administration reform in the Baltic states, Riga, Latvia, 27-29 May 1998 7. EMEP/WMO Workshop on data analysis and interpretation, Helsinki, Finland, 14-18 September 1998 8. Workshop on the Bug river basin pilot project, Zamose, Poland, 30 September-3 October 1998 9. Workshop on biological assessment and monitoring, Zakopane, Poland, 12-13 October 1998 10. Workshop on Ipel/Ipoly river catchment ares pilot project, Balassagyarmat, Hungary, 13-15 October 1998 11. Workshop on the Latorytsya/Latorica-Uzh/Uh river basin pilot project, Kosice, Slovakia, 28-30 October 1998 12. Workshop and study tour on the Masos river pilot project, Hungary and Romania, 2-6 November 1998 13. OECD/ECE Workshop on new developments in chemical emergency preparedness and response, Lappeenranta, Finland, 3-6 November 1998 14. Workshop on the Moravia river basin pilot project, Bratislava, Slovakia, 12-13 November 1998 15. Workshop on land market development, Budapest, Hungary, 30 November-2 December 1998 Planned: 16. Workshop on the significance of ECE policies and instruments for the sustainable development of Central Asian countries, Geneva, 15-16 March 1999 17. Workshop for high-level decision makers of Central Asian states on experience of countries with limited water resources in strategy on public awareness in water conservation, Bishkek, Kyrgyzstan, 30-31 March 1999 18. Workshop on river and lake commissions, Bonn, Germany, 14-15 September 1999 19. Seminar on the prevention of chemical accidents and limitations of their impact on transboundary waters, Hamburg, Germany, 4-6 October 1999 20. Seminar on flood prevention and protection, Berlin, Germany, 7-8 October 1999 21. Workshop on land-based pollution control in catchment areas of international lakes, Tallinn, Estonia, Nov. 1999 22. ECE/OECD Workshop on enhancing the environment by reforming energy prices, Czech Republic, June 2000

Division	Title
ENVIRONMENT (continued)	Training courses 1. Basic principles of industrial safety, Budapest, Hungary, 30 September-2 October 1998 Planned: 2. Points of contact under Industrial Accidents Convention, Moscow (Noginsk), Russian Federation, 7-8 June 1999
STATISTICS	Workshops 1. Workshop on human development and social trends reporting for the CIS countries, Kiev, Ukraine, 4-7 March 1998 2. Workshop on family budget surveys in CIS, Minsk, Belarus, 12-17 March 1998 3. Workshop on pilot censuses and census processing for CIS and Mongolia, Moscow, Russian Federation, 31 March-4 April 1998 4. Workshop on Geographical Information Systems (GIS) planning for CIS and Eastern Europe, Bratislava, Slovakia, 27-29 April 1998 5. Seminar on Integrated Statistical Information Systems, Geneva, 27-29 May 1998 6. Workshop on GIS for central and eastern Europe, Bled, Slovenia, 22-26 June 1998 7. Workshop on labour force surveys for CIS and Mongolia, Kiev, Ukraine, 14-19 September 1998 8. Work Session on Geographical Information Systems, Ottawa, Canada, 5-7 October 1998 9. ECE/WHO Joint meeting on health statistics, Rome, Italy, 14-16 October 1998 10. Workshop on census post-collection activities for CIS, Central and Eastern Europe, and Mongolia, Dublin, Ireland, 11-14 November 1998 11. Workshop on gender statistics for Romania and the Balkan countries, Bucharest, Romania, 27-29 January 1999 12. Workshop on the management of statistical information technology, Geneva, 15-17 February 1999 Planned: 13. Joint ECE/Eurostat workshop on statistical data confidentiality, Thessaloniki, Greece, 8-10 March 1999 14. Workshop on gender statistics for the Central Asian Republics, and possibly Caucasus countries, Almaty, Kazakhstan, March 1999 15. Workshop on statistical data editing, Rome, Italy, 4-6 June 1999 16. Workshop on statistical metadata, Geneva, 22-24 September 1999

Division	Title
TRADE	Workshops/seminars 1. Seminar on forestry training for target groups that are hard to reach, France, 20-24 April 1998 2. Seminar on economic aspects of clean technologies, energy and waste management, Linz, Austria, 22-24 April 1998 3. First Baltic Conference on forest fire, Poland, 4-8 May, 1998 4. Seminar on the privatisation of public utilities, Tallinn, 15 May 1998 5. Workshop on certification of sustainable forest management in countries in transition, Prague, Czech Republic, 30 August-2 September 1998 6. Seminar on improving working conditions and increasing productivity in forestry, Banska Stiavnica, Slovakia, 9-12 September 1998 7. Workshop on recycling, energy and market interactions, Istanbul, Turkey, 3-6 November 1998 8. Workshop on trade finance, Istanbul, Turkey, February 1999 9. Forum on improving trade finance and investment for the Russian timber sector, Geneva, 26 February 1999 Planned: 10. Seminar on analysis, methodology of treatment and remediation of contaminated soils, Paris, France, 13-15 April 1999 11. Workshop on radioactive contaminated metallurgical scrap, Prague, Czech Republic, 26-28 May 1999 12. Workshop on reducing the impact of forest operations on ecosystems, Germany, September 1999 13. Seminar on forest operations of tomorrow, Pessac, France, 20-24 September, 1999 14. Seminar on digital economy and internet enterprise development in transition economies, Geneva, November 1999 15. Workshop on capacity building to improve trade finance and investment prospects for the Russian timber sector, Geneva, 3 December 1999 16. Workshop on development of marketing of sawnwood in countries in transition, Minsk, Belarus, 1999 or 2000 17. Seminar on competitiveness in basic industries: trends in the structure of steel consumption, Budapest, Hungary, May 2000 Study tours 1. Study tour on the Portuguese chemical industry, Portugal, 11-17 July 1998

Division	Title
TRADE (cont.)	Planned: 2. Forest and forest industries study tour in Ireland, Ireland, 5-11 September 1999 3. Study tour on the Chinese steel industry, 15-22 Oct. 2000
TRANSPORT	<u>Workshops/seminars</u> 1. TEMSTAT coordination and training Meeting - Southern Group, Istanbul, Turkey, 25-27 March 1998 2. TEMSTAT coordination and training Meeting - Northern Group, Prague, Czech Republic, 30 March-1 April 1998 3. Workshop on preparation of TER railway projects, Budapest, Hungary, September 1998 4. Seminar on transport infrastructure financing in the Mediterranean, Barcelona, Spain, 27-30 October 1998 5. TER seminar on implementation of directives adopted by the EU, Paris, France, 1-3 February 1999 Planned: 6. Workshop on GIS in transport, 15-16 November 1999 7. Exchange of experiences on the programming of infrastructures and the dissemination of methods of programming in central and eastern European countries, Germany, November 1999 8. Workshop on methodology for traffic forecasting on the TER network, 1999 <u>Training courses</u> 1. Software for optimisation of loans - INNOFINITO, Prague, Czech Republic, 9-10 November 1998 2. Training workshop of TER experts on macro-economic evaluation of transport infrastructure investments, Budapest, Hungary, November 1998 Planned: 3. Implementation of TER data bank, Piran, Slovenia, March 1999 4. TEMSTAT training course, Vilnius, Lithuania, 7-9 April 1999

Division	Title
COORDINATING UNIT FOR OPERATIONAL ACTIVITIES	<u>Workshops/seminars</u> 1. Workshop on SMEs and entrepreneurship, Mangalia, Romania, 7- 8 May 1998 2. Expert Meeting on best practice in financing SMEs, Geneva, 14-15 May 1998 3. Workshop on financing mechanism for renewable energy projects, Almaty, Kazakhstan, 30 September-2 October 1998 4. Seminar on the role of governments in enterprise creation and support to SMEs, Potenza, Italy, 23-26 September 1998 5. Workshop on SMEs - their needs for human and financial resources, Chisinau, Republic of Moldova, 19-20 November 1998 Planned: 6. Workshop on the role of local and regional Governments in enterprise creation, Yerevan, Armenia, 18-19 March 1999 7. Expert Meeting on best practice in business incubation, Geneva, 3-4 June 1999 8. Workshop on SMEs in action, Izmir, Turkey, September 1999 9. Workshop on regional tourism and local capacity building, Sochi, Russian Federation, October/November 1999 10. Workshop on economic efficiency of various renewable energy sources, Bishkek, Kyrgyzstan, autumn 1999 11. Workshop on information in research and development activities - obstacles and problems, Valetta, Malta, autumn 1999 <u>Training course</u> Planned: 1. Joint ECE/ESCAP training course on training of trainers in start-ups entrepreneurs for Central Asian transition economies", Almaty, Kazakhstan, 10-14 April 1999

Table 3. Operational activities for subregional groupings/special initiatives/programmes

Subregional groupings/ special initiatives/ programmes	Activities
Black Sea Economic Cooperation (BSEC)	- Joint organization of Workshops on SMEs: "SMEs and Entrepreurship" (Romania, May 1998); "SMEs - Their Needs in Financial and Human Resources (Republic of Moldova, November 1998: and "The Role of Local and Regional Governments in Enterprise Creation" (Armenia, March 1999). Two more workshops in this area are planned in Turkey (SMEs in Action) and Russian Federation (Regional Tourism and Local Capacity Building) next autumn. Preparation of a Workshop on Trade Finance (Turkey, February, 1999) - Development of a network of SME focal points for the BSEC countries - Review of the development of Energy Efficiency Demonstration Zones in BSEC countries and financial mechanisms to be elaborated for realisation of energy efficiency projects in these Zones was prepared and proposed to BSEC secretariat as background material for a joint workshop - Participation in meetings of Ministers of Foreign Affairs of the BSEC participating States
Central European Initiative (CEI)	- Cooperation agreement on joint ECE/CEI cooperation programme was signed in May 1998. A focal point for ECE/CEI cooperation projects in the ECE secretariat was appointed in October 1998. Web page on this programme including an interactive version of the CEI forms for project presentation was prepared - The CEI Project Opportunity Methodology (project outline profile and organisation profile forms) was jointly prepared by ECE and EBRD - Support and substantive contribution was made to CEI Summit Economic Forum (Croatia, November 1998). A study on "Economic Disparities in Central and Eastern Europe and the Impact of EU Enlargement" was prepared. ECE materials on different issues related to economies in transition were distributed at the ECE stand - Ten project proposals were prepared and presented at the above Forum

Subregional groupings/ special initiatives/ programmes	Activities
Central European Initiative (CEI) (cont.)	- Assistance to the CEI Working Group on SMEs in preparation of strategy and work programme (discussion paper prepared) - Substantive contribution to the CEI/SECI Seminar on "The Role of Government in Enterprise Creation and support to SMEs" (Italy, September 1998)
Commonwealth of Independent States (CIS)	- Participation in meeting of the Interstate Ecological Council (Georgia, December 1998). ECE was invited to assist CIS in the development of their convention on environmental security and in promoting Council's initiative on environmental impact assessment and information - Cooperation with the CIS Interstate Economic Committee. Cooperation with Interstate Eurasian Coal and Metals Community - Project "Energy Efficiency and Security in CIS Countries" was formulated and the first workshop on the subject was held in Moscow, September 1998. Another workshop is being prepared for April 1999 - Cooperation with the Interstate Statistical Committee. A Workshop on pilot censuses and census processing was held in Moscow in March-April 1998
Southeast European Cooperative Initiative (SECI)	- Implementation of the following projects is under way: (a) Trade facilitation - actions to overcome border crossing difficulties (lead country - Greece) (b) Transport infrastructure - identification of bottlenecks along main international corridors in the SECI region and short-term measures to remove them (lead country - Bulgaria) (c) Financial policies to promote SMEs through microcredit and credit guarantee schemes (lead country - Romania) (d) Energy efficiency demonstration zones network in southeast Europe (lead country - Hungary) (e) Interconnection of natural gas networks, diversification of gas supply and improvement of security of supply in southeast Europe (lead country - Bosnia and Herzegovina) (f) Recovery programme for rivers, lakes and adjacent seas (lead country - Austria) (g) Interconnection of electricity grids (lead country - The former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia) (h) Cooperation among security markets (lead country - Turkey)

Subregional groupings/ special initiatives/ programmes	Activities
Southeast European Cooperative Initiative (SECI) (cont.)	(i) Combatting cross-border crime and corruption (lead country - Romania) - For each project, several project group meetings have been held. The ECE secretariat contributed to the organization of these meetings, prepared background documents and final reports - Efforts have been made to secure financial support for the projects and the involvement of the business community in their implementation
Special Programme for Economies of Central Asia (SPECA)	- The Tashkent Declaration on SPECA was signed on 26 March 1998 by Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, Uzbekistan and Tajikistan. Turkmenistan officially informed of its decision to join the programme in September 1998 - The following projects have been selected for implementation under this programme: (a) Transport infrastructure and border crossing facilitation (lead country - Kazakhstan) (b) Rational and efficient use of energy and water resources of Central Asis lead country - Kyrgyzstan) (C) International economic conference (lead country - Tajikistan) (d) Regional cooperation in developing a multi-choice approach to hydrocarbon supply routes through pipelines to the world markets (lead country - Turkmenistan) (e) Subject of the project with Uzbekistan as a lead country has not yet decided - Project working groups (PWG) were established for each project. ECE experts in cooperation with ESCAP have contributed to the first sessions of PWG for projects (a) and (b), and conducted preparatory work for PWG sessions under the other projects - Terms of reference for creating a working group on SMEs between Central Asian transition economies was prepared.

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CROSS-SECTORAL CONCERNS INCLUDING INTERSECTORAL LINKAGES

Note by the secretariat

• The Plan of Action identified four cross-sectoral concerns which are particularly relevant for ECE work and which have, therefore, to permeate all its activities. The progress made in respect of two of them - sustainable development and gender mainstreaming - is reported below.

• Intersectoral cooperation has been developed in two cases: Transport and Environment; Energy and Environment. In addition, most of the PSBs have integrated the sustainable development dimension in their activities. The Commission may wish to invite the Committee on Environmental Policy to review all the activities related to sustainable development as discussed in this note and make suggestions to each PSB and to the Commission for a more systematic approach at the ECE level.

• Gender mainstreaming in all programmes of work of the UN organizations is a request emanating from the fourth World Conference on Women which has been further developed and strongly emphasized by the Agreed Conclusions adopted by ECOSOC at its 1997 substantive session. While gender mainstreaming in the ECE programme of work as established by PSBs is still uneven, the Commission

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intends to pursue the process and extend it to those areas which have not yet succeeded in doing so. In view of the General Assembly's request that the regional commissions provide, within their mandates, regional inputs to the 2000 review of the implementation of the Platform for Action, member States may wish to convene a meeting of experts at the intergovernmental level which would review economic issues, problems and policies relating to the situation of women in ECE countries over the past five years.

1. The Plan of Action identified four cross-sectoral concerns which are particularly relevant for ECE work and which have, therefore, to permeate all its activities. The progress made in respect of two of them - sustainable development and gender mainstreaming - is reported below.

I. SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT

Environment

2. The ECE Committee on Environmental Policy (CEP) plays the key policy role in furthering pan-European cooperation on the environmental component of sustainability. All the activities included in its programme of work promote the regional implementation of Agenda 21. Its work is organized around three pillars: the Environment for Europe process; the environmental performance reviews; and the environmental conventions.

(a) Environment for Europe

3. The Ministerial Conferences provide political impetus to the "Environment for Europe" process which is recognized as the major long-term pan-European political framework for the promotion of environmentally sound and sustainable development. The Committee on Environmental Policy and the Executive Body for the Convention on Long-range Transboundary Air Pollution prepared much substantive input to the fourth Ministerial Conference (Århus, June 1998), which was endorsed, adopted or welcomed by the Ministers. The implementation of the decisions taken needs to be followed up and progress reported to the next conference in Kiev (Ukraine) in 2002. In this perspective, the CEP was requested to continue to screen the Environmental Programme for Europe, thereby promoting priority actions to be undertaken on a pan-European level. The Ministers also decided that an ad hoc working group of senior officials for the preparation of the 2002 conference, serviced by the ECE secretariat, should be convened two years before the conference.

4. In addition to this catalytic role for the process as a whole, ECE is directly involved in the following components of the outcome of the Conference:

(i) Convention on Access to Information, Public Participation in Decision-making and Access to Justice in Environmental Matters. This Convention was prepared under the auspices of the Committee on Environmental Policy and signed in Århus by 35 member States and the European Community. The first meeting of the Signatories to the Convention, open to all ECE member States, international organizations and non-governmental organizations, will be organized in April 1999. It will prepare a concrete work plan for the coming years for approval by the Committee at its sixth session.

(ii) Policy Statement on Energy Efficiency. The Århus Conference endorsed this statement and welcomed the Guidelines on Energy Conservation in Europe submitted by the CEP. The Guidelines are intended to assist ECE member countries, particularly countries in transition, in the elaboration and implementation of national, regional and local energy efficiency policies and their better integration into energy, environmental, economic and social development strategies. The Committee on Sustainable Energy, through the Steering Committee for the Energy Efficiency 2000 Project, participated in the development of the Guidelines. The Århus Conference also endorsed a strategy, submitted by the Committee on Environmental Policy, to phase out leaded fuel in Europe. The Committee, at its fifth session, decided to establish mechanisms to review the implementation of these decisions taken by Ministers in Århus and to prepare follow-up reports to the next ministerial conference.

(iii) Recommendations to Governments of ECE countries in transition on the application of economic instruments for better integrating environmental policy with sectoral policies. The Ministers welcomed these recommendations which were submitted by the CEP and resulted from a joint ECE/OECD endeavour. As a follow-up, preparations started for an ECE/OECD Workshop on Enhancing the Environment by Reforming Energy Prices, to be held in 2000 in the Czech Republic.

(iv) The CEP also transmitted to the Århus Conference the proceedings of the Workshop on Encouraging Local Initiatives Towards Sustainable Consumption Patterns, recommendations to ECE Governments prepared thereof, and reports on the implementation of the Environmental Programme for Europe and the ECE Guidelines on Public Participation in Environmental Decision-making.

(b) Environmental Performance Reviews

5. The ECE continues to develop Environmental Performance Reviews (EPRs) for countries in transition. EPRs include a series of preparatory missions addressing environmental issues in a wide range of policy areas and culminate in a peer review making recommendations which are subsequently followed up. The EPRs of Lithuania and Latvia were concluded with the Peer Reviews by the Committee on Environmental Policy at its 1998 annual session. The final reports are being published in the Environmental Performance Reviews Series. The review of Ukraine entered into its final phase after the organization of the review mission in Kiev in October 1998; the Peer Review is planned in September 1999. The review mission of the Croatian EPR project is planned for March 1999 and the EPR of Kyrgyzstan started in February 1999, with the preparatory mission. The ECE secretariat is cooperating with OECD on the review of the Russian Federation.

6. The Committee on Environmental Policy, at its fifth session, decided to initiate a programme to improve the integration of environmental concerns into sectoral policies. Based on the experience at national and international levels, a high-level group of governmental officials is expected to be entrusted with the preparation of a set of policy recommendations to ECE Governments, in the form of guidelines or a charter. The outcome would be presented for adoption at the next ministerial conference "Environment for Europe" in 2002.

(c) Environmental Conventions

7. Following its success in developing and implementing the five existing protocols, the Executive Body of the Convention on Long-range Transboundary Air Pollution agreed to prepare three new ones: on persistent organic pollutants, on heavy metals, and on nitrogen oxides and related substances. The first two protocols were adopted and signed at Århus. The third, on nitrogen oxides and related substances, has a multi-pollutant, multi-effect approach, which requires much scientific input, and is envisaged for 1999. The Executive Body focuses, furthermore, on implementation of and compliance with existing agreements, effect-oriented activities, long-range atmospheric transport monitoring, and integrated assessment modelling.

8. The first meeting of the Parties to the Convention on Environmental Impact Assessment in a Transboundary Context took place, at ministerial level, in Oslo, in May 1998. The Parties established a work plan for the implementation of the Convention with emphasis on legal, administrative and methodological aspects of its practical application, strengthening the capability of countries with economies in transition to comply with its obligations, and promotion of bilateral and multilateral agreements on EIA.

9. The activities on the implementation of the Convention on the Protection and Use of Transboundary Watercourses and International Lakes focus on five priority programme areas: joint bodies; assistance to countries with economies in transition; integrated management of water and related ecosystems; land-based pollution control; and water supply and human health. In addition, field projects are under way on monitoring and assessing transboundary waters in 12 countries, and work continues on the improvement of laboratory management and accreditation procedures.

10. The activities under the Convention on the Transboundary Effects of Industrial Accidents concentrate on: building capacity to prevent, prepare for and respond to industrial accidents, in particular in countries in transition through two ECE regional coordinating centres established under the Convention; developing a programme for the prevention of accidental transboundary water pollution; developing a procedure for identifying hazardous activities; testing the ECE Accident Notification System; and preparing the first meeting of the Parties.

Transport

11. The ECE Inland Transport Committee provides a significant contribution to sustainable development. The work of the Committee is aimed at the achievement of an efficient and well balanced inland transport system in the ECE region, a most basic requirement for the economic development of ECE member countries and for their integration in the European and global economy, while at the same time improving the safety and environmental performance of such a transport system. The Committee improves the environmental performance of the transport sector through both the reduction of the environmental impacts of road transport and the promotion of transport modes which are more environmentally sound. This is done through the development of international Agreements and Conventions which are legally binding for the countries which become Contracting Parties to them. Examples of legal instruments having a major impact on the environmental components of the transport sector are the 1958 Agreement on the construction of vehicles, which includes regulations on vehicles' gaseous and noise emissions, the Agreement on the International Carriage of Dangerous Goods by Road, which helps prevent environmentally damaging transport accidents, and the AGC, AGN and AGTC agreements, which promote the development of rail, inland water and combined transport, respectively.

Statistics

12. Because of the substantial statistical work on sustainable development which is being done by OECD, Eurostat and the United Nations Statistics Division, the Conference of European Statisticians has no expert group devoted to that topic. However, topics relating to sustainable development are

frequently discussed in other environmental forums of the Conference. For example, the group of experts which deals with methodological issues of environment statistics will this year discuss how basic statistics, green accounting and statistical indicators can contribute to policy decision towards sustainable development. The priority areas of that group, which are issues related to the development of concepts, definitions and classifications common to all environmental media and the assurance of compatibility of these with economic data, are also important in sustainable development.

Human settlements

13. Further integrating the sustainable development dimension into its programme of work is a major direction for the Committee on Human Settlements and is reflected in its activities as follows.

14. At its fifty-ninth session in September 1998, the Committee selected urban governance as an umbrella topic for all programme activities in view of its role in sustainable human settlements development through strengthening democratic and multi-purpose local government and the involvement of citizens through various forms of public participation in the decision making process. Preparations are under way for workshops on urban governance and on sustainability aspects of urban transport to be held in the year 2000.

15. The Meeting of Officials on Land Administration, a subsidiary body of the Committee, addresses the issue of sustainable development through its activities on promotion of a formal system of land and property laws that ensure long-term internal confidence among people, enterprises and governments. Through a series of workshops, it has developed a set of recommendations to ECE Governments on setting up multi-purpose land registration and cadastre systems with registers containing information on the use of real property, which is essential for the decision-making process on environmental protection matters, economic efficiency, promotion of sustainable financial markets and taxation systems.

16. As a follow-up to the Workshop on Encouraging Local Initiatives Towards Sustainable Consumption Patterns, organized jointly with the Committee on Environmental Policy in 1998 in Vienna, the Committee on Human Settlements, at its fifty-ninth session, decided to undertake the preparation of case studies on environmentally sound urban and regional transport management coordinated with sustainable land-use planning. Their assessment would: (i) identify partnership arrangements which could be recommended to ECE Governments in their action towards sustainable consumption patterns; (ii) identify barriers (e.g. regulations planning, economic and fiscal disincentives) which need to be dismantled to promote sustainable consumption initiatives at the local level; (iii) demonstrate how central/local level cooperation on sustainable

consumption issues promotes urban governance including public participation and awareness.

Timber

17. Sustainable development of the forest and timber sector is at the very heart of the programme of the Timber Committee. Since UNCED in 1992, the focus of the Committee's work has been clearly and explicitly on "monitoring and analysis of sustainable forest management in the region". Contributing to sustainable forest management, notably the UNCED follow-up and the pan-European ministerial process on protection of forests in Europe have "over-riding priority" in the integrated work programme with the FAO European Forestry Committee. The Timber Committee's activities in support of sustainable development of the forest and timber sector contain the following major components:

(i) Maintenance and improvement of the information base, including data on the forest resource (the forthcoming Temperate and Boreal Forest Resource assessment 2000 - TBFRA - covers all aspects, including biodiversity, protection status, forest condition etc. as well as traditional parameters such as forest area growing stock increment and harvest), on production and trade of forest products, and conditions on forest products markets, etc. This includes constant review of concepts and improvement of the availability of the information;

(ii) Participation in efforts to define and collect data on indicators of sustainable forest management. ECE provided most of the data on the these indicators for the Ministerial Conference at Lisbon in June 1998;

(iii) Studies of the outlook for the sector, notably for the balance between supply and demand for forest products and the implications for forest policy;

(iv) Providing a forum for discussion of major issues linked with sustainable forest management, e.g a proposed seminar on trade and environment issues in the forest sector;

(v) Input to policy discussions, e.g. a paper by a team of specialists on "people, forests and sustainability" which was the foundation of the Lisbon resolution on socio-economic aspects of sustainable forest management.

18. From the cross-sectoral point of view, information generated by the Timber Committee, especially in the context of TBFRA, is input to analysis of other sectors (e.g. on climate change, under the Kyoto Protocol, or the "forest" part of the OECD environmental indicators) and the Committee

expressly considers the consequences of policy decisions in other fields, such as energy or environmental policy on the sustainability of the forest and timber sector.

Industry and enterprise development

19. ECE activities in the steel and chemical sectors have a strong environmental dimension. With regard to steel, the programme "Metallurgy and Ecology" provided the framework for organizing seminars on issues such as steel recycling, clean technologies in the steel industries, utilisation and disposal of wastes in the steel industries. Several publications in the same field include "Directory of the steel industry and the environment" and "Restructuring of the Iron and Steel Industry - Impact of New Technologies". In 1999, the biennial publication on "Metallurgical scrap" will be updated. In May 1999, a seminar jointly organized by ECE and IAEA on "Radioactive contaminated metallurgical scrap" will take place in Prague, aiming at harmonizing international regulations and detection and monitoring systems.

20. Environmental aspects of chemical industry are addressed through the ECE regional programme (Chemical Industry Sustainable Ecological and Economic Development) which includes the following elements: Pilot Project Demonstrating the Environmental Cleanup of Selected Sites Contaminated by Chemicals; Compendium of Soil Cleanup Technologies and Soil Remediation Companies; Seminar on Analysis, Methodology of Treatment and Remediation of Contaminated Soils, April 1999; CHEMLEX Databank on Chemical Legislation in the ECE Region (CD-ROM).

21. Most of these projects are oriented to assisting countries in transition to improve environmental standards, introduce best practices in their production, improve competitiveness and harmonize legislation and standards so as to minimize non-tariff trade barrier accusations.

Sustainable energy

22. Energy will be the central theme of the ninth session of the Commission on Sustainable Development (CSD). All United Nations entities dealing with energy issues are invited to contribute within their areas of expertise, the main track being the elaboration of a common system-wide approach to energy and sustainable development prior to CSD-9. The ECE Committee on Sustainable Energy intends to be part of this process by adopting a set of most relevant regional policy issues and recommendations (2000) to be submitted to CSD-9 for deliberations. Furthermore, a high-level senior Meeting on Sustainable Energy is under consideration to be held in 2000, prior to CSD-9.

23. Energy efficiency, an issue directly related to sustainable development, is a major component of the work of the Committee. The EE 2000 project

entered successfully into its third phase (1997-2000). At its last session in October 1998, the Committee organized a high-level round table on "How the Energy Industries Will Response to Kyoto Requirements". Project proposals on mitigating greenhouse-gas emissions have been developed, some of them already financed.

24. A three-year Project for Climate Change Mitigation and Sustainable Energy Systems has been developed and financed by the United Nations Fund for International Partnerships (UNFIP). The Project is expected to enhance the energy efficiency, infrastructure and capacity of five east European and CIS countries (Belarus, Bulgaria, Kazakhstan, Russian Federation and Ukraine). It will focus on specific initiatives in three areas: municipal lighting, hospitals and district heating. The specific objectives are to develop, finance and implement energy-efficient projects as well as to improve energy-efficiency policies in the above five countries.

25. Two other areas related to sustainable energy can be highlighted: (i) promoting clean coal technology for electricity generation in economies in transition; and (ii) promoting the use of renewable energy through relevant technologies and financial mechanisms. For both areas, seminars have been organized by ECE in countries in transition.

Intersectoral activities: Transport and Environment

26. As a follow-up to the Regional Conference on Transport and the Environment (Vienna, 1997), the Joint Meeting on Transport and the Environment took place in July 1998 to consider, in particular, the status of implementation of the Programme of Joint Action, the role of the lead countries/bodies and national focal points and the future work of the Joint Meeting. The Programme of Joint Action is intended to be implemented during the next ten years. The Bureaux of the Committee on Environmental Policy and of the Inland Transport Committee as well as the major international organizations involved in Transport and Environment participated in this first meeting.

27. In order to advance the follow-up process and to prepare the second Joint Meeting on Transport and Environment, the ECE secretariat is performing the following tasks: (i) completing the list of National Focal Points and preparing a reporting mechanism which will facilitate exchange of experiences and best practices; (ii) preparing guidelines for the report of the Lead Actors on international activities; (iii) establishing a data base on the information provided by the National Focal Points and the Lead Actors; (iv) preparing proposals for the Joint Meeting on priority areas so as to focus the follow up process on those issues which have the strongest impact on the environment and which are of common interest to a good number of countries.

28. The Committee on Environmental Policy is cooperating with WHO/EURO, through a jointly established European Environment and Health Committee, in the preparations for a third Ministerial Conference on Environment and Health to take place in London from 16 to 18 June 1999. The Conference is expected to adopt a protocol on water and health to the ECE Convention on the Protection and Use of Transboundary Watercourses and International Lakes, a charter on transport, environment and health and a ministerial declaration. The Committee on Environmental Policy will analyse the Conference's outcome in September 1999 and cooperate/participate in follow-up activities jointly or in close cooperation with WHO/EURO.

II. GENDER MAINSTREAMING

Environment

29. In this area, gender concerns have been expressed within the framework of the Convention on Access to Information, Public Participation in Decision-making and Access to Justice in Environmental Matters. NGOs active on gender equality issues participated in the preparatory meetings and their advocacy led to the integration of the principle of gender equality in the preamble of the Convention.

Transport

30. The Working Party on Transport Statistics made a first step in gender-mainstreaming by agreeing to include in the Common Questionnaire for Transport Statistics a gender breakdown in transport sector employment. Subsequently, data were published for the first time in the ECE Annual Bulletin of Transport Statistics for Europe and North America in 1996. In an effort to incorporate a gender perspective into other aspects of its programme of work, the Working Party asked the secretariat to collect from Governments relevant gender-specific transport data other than those already collected by the Common Questionnaire. In March 1998, the secretariat requested such data from ECE member countries and replies were received from Belarus, Latvia and the Russian Federation.

Statistics

31. Gender statistics has been recognized as a special field of statistics in the work programme of the Conference of European Statisticians with its own objectives, outputs and activities. As a relatively new field, gender statistics has been given increased attention and resources and expert meetings have been organized regularly by the Conference at approximately 2-3 year intervals since 1985. The last meeting took place in April of 1998 and focussed on unpaid work and economic well-being and career mobility over a lifetime. By offering a gender forum to statistical offices, the Conference

has played an active and important role in institutionalizing gender statistics and mainstreaming gender into the work of many national statistical offices.

32. Gender has also been mainstreamed, with a particular focus on the political participation of women in member countries, into the ECE Yearbook Trends in Europe and North America prepared by the Statistical Division. A new major gender publication is also being prepared in collaboration with national statistical offices, which will assess progress since the last World Conference on Women in Beijing in 1995.

Economic analysis

33. Each year the Economic Survey of Europe includes a subsection on unemployment in transition economies where gender specific unemployment rates and shares are also analysed. In the forthcoming survey 1999, No.1, a full section on female employment and unemployment will be included in the chapter on labour markets - covering Bulgaria, Czech Republic, Estonia, Hungary, Latvia, Lithuania, Poland, Romania, Slovakia, Slovenia, Russian Federation. Another chapter will consider the extent to which the economic impact of transition could explain the generally falling birth rate in these economies, as measured by the number of children a woman may expect to have in her lifetime. This analysis will also consider the way in which women's roles have changed in the transition, the degree of support for child care facilities, how and to whom child benefit is paid, and the present situation with regard to maternity leave.

Trade, industry and enterprise development

34. In the field of trade, it has been more difficult to incorporate gender aspects in the programme of work. Some possibilities exist in the work relating to investment promotion and enterprise development and the secretariat plans to request approval from the Committee on Trade, Industry and Enterprise Development (CTIED) for a project to obtain more participation by non-governmental organizations which work with women in trade-related fields in the ECE region. The project would consist of researching and identifying such NGOs and then sending them an invitation letter together with an information package on the Division's work programme together with a calendar of meetings. In addition, the CTIED has requested that resources be shifted to a new horizontal work programme in the enterprise development area where it may be somewhat easier to incorporate a gender perspective into some of the projects, and particularly any related to management.

Timber

35. The role of women in the forest and forest products sector has attracted very little attention in developed countries, with the exception of the Nordic countries (although there is a large literature on the role of women in sustainable forest management in developing countries). Thus the issues are not clear and even basic information is lacking. In recognition of this fact, the Timber Committee, with its sister body the FAO European Forest Commission, has started to explore the topic. At their joint session in 1997, the special topic was "the role of women in forestry (with two presentations, country reports and a discussion). Thereafter the team of specialists on socio-economic aspects of forests, in its work for the third Ministerial Conference on the protection of Forests in Europe (June 1998), addressed this issue, which was subsequently identified in a resolution of the Ministerial Conference. A seminar on the topic of "Women in forestry", under the auspices of the Joint FAO/ECE/ILO Committee on Forest Technology, Management and Training will be held in Portugal in 2001. Some interviews of women forest owners have been conducted and their outcome will soon be published in a discussion paper.

Human settlements

36. The Committee on Human Settlements has seriously considered gender mainstreaming and is committed to the integration of gender perspectives it in its programme of work whenever possible. This applies in particular to the design and implementation of environmentally sound and sustainable policies, including infrastructure development, and the promotion of equal participation of women in human settlements planning and decision-making. It is expected to initiate case studies aimed at contributing to strengthening policies and practices in this area.

37. As an illustration of the commitment of the Committee, the Eighth Conference on Urban and Regional Planning has taken up the issue of gender equality, as shown in its report which states: "Gender issues and inequalities do not always attract enough attention in the development of urban communities. Usually urban planning does not take into account the difference in behaviour and the implications for urban life of the massive integration of women into the labour market. Women are more affected by the negative impacts of spatial urban development, which manifests itself in a dispersal of activities, inadequate transport, environmental degradation etc."

Seminar on Implementing Economic and Social Rights of Women in Countries in Transition, Warsaw, October 1998

38. This event was organized by the NGO Working Group on Women in the ECE region, in partnership with the ECE secretariat and the Warsaw Centre for the

Advancement of Women. It covered the following themes: impact of transition and globalization on women's economic and social rights; women's access to waged employment and to self employment in the countries in transition; and interrelationship between rights to employment and social rights. The seminar showed that in most of the countries with economies in transition, women bear most of the hardships and, in order to secure basic support to the family, are obliged to take lower paid jobs and move from the formal sector to the informal sector. The participants therefore underlined the need to provide women with greater access to economic and social rights, which requires that gender concerns be integrated into the corresponding policy areas. It was also stressed that the process of shaping policies and measures having a gender impact should include consultations with women NGOs in order to take their views and experiences into consideration.

2000 review of the implementation of the Beijing Platform for Action

39. The ECE is planning to hold a meeting gathering together the UN and non-UN organizations active in issues of women's advancement and gender equality in the ECE region. The meeting will review the progress made and obstacles met in the work of participating agencies in this area (data collection, analysis and operational activities).

40. ECOSOC and the General Assembly have encouraged the regional commissions to organize, within their mandate, events providing a regional input to the 2000 review of the Beijing Platform for Action. In response to this, ECE member States may wish to convene a meeting of experts at the intergovernmental level which would review economic issues, problems and policies relating to the situation of women in the ECE countries.

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FOLLOW-UP TO THE ECOSOC RESOLUTION RELATING TO THE REGIONAL COMMISSIONS

Note by the Executive Secretary

- This note provides information on follow-up to ECOSOC resolution 1998/46 which inter alia provided guidance on how to optimize the potential of regional commissions both as regional outposts of the UN and as the regional expression of the United Nations occupying a niche in the institutional landscape of their respective geographical areas. The follow-up action, which is of an ongoing and dynamic nature, relates to participation in management coordination mechanisms, UN system Regional Inter-Agency Meetings; and cooperation with global UN entities.

- The Commission may wish to decide that information contained in this report be transmitted to ECOSOC.

GE.99- 20764

BACKGROUND

1. In his report to the 1998 session of the Economic and Social Council (ECOSOC) on regional cooperation (E/1998/65), the Secretary-General emphasized the dual role of the regional commissions: on the one hand "as regional outposts of the United Nations, they carry out certain functions so as to contribute to the Organization's global work programme", and, "on the other hand, as the regional expressions of the United Nations, they occupy a niche in the institutional landscape of their respective geographical areas." He then discussed how to optimize the potential of the commissions.

2. Subsequently, ECOSOC, in its resolution 1998/46 of 31 July 1998 acknowledged the role played by the regional commissions in norm-setting, analysis and dissemination as well as operational activities. It also recognized that the commissions provide an important forum for articulating regional perspectives on global issues and for building consensus within their respective region.

3. ECOSOC recommended that the activities of the regional commissions should be more effectively linked with the overall activities of the United Nations in the economic and social sectors. To this end, for example, the Executive Secretaries should be actively involved in the Secretary-General's Executive Committees on Economic and Social Affairs (EC-ESA) and the United Nations Development Group (UNDG). Along the same lines, ECOSOC encouraged joint exercises between the commissions and other secretariat entities such as the United Nations Conference on Trade and Development (UNCTAD) and the Department of Economic and Social Affairs (DESA). The need for the funds and programmes to utilize the capacity of the commissions was also stressed and the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) was asked to consult more closely with the commissions during the programming stages of its regional activities. The reactivation of the UNDP/regional commissions task force was also called for.

4. The ECOSOC resolution also emphasized the importance of cooperation with relevant non UN regional bodies. ECE's cooperation with these partners, which is reported on in documents E/ECE/1368 and E/ECE/1371, is accorded a high priority not only because such entities can provide a strong political support to the implementation of instruments developed within ECE but also because this partnership can best address the global and regional challenges confronting Europe today.

5. Finally, ECOSOC agreed with the Secretary-General's proposal to hold yearly inter-agency meetings in each region, to be chaired by the Deputy Secretary-General or the Executive Secretaries, with a view to improving coordination among the work programmes of the organizations of the United

Nations system in that region. The outcome of these meetings would be reported to the Council through the intergovernmental bodies of the commissions as appropriate.

FOLLOW-UP ACTION

6. Since the ECOSOC resolution, a number of actions have taken place which respond to the guidance it provided.

Participation in management coordination mechanisms

7. Regional commissions are better involved in the UN global management:

- The Executive Secretaries participate in the meetings of the EC-ESA which take place 4-6 times a year. These meetings address issues of common concern and coordination. For example, the group agreed to prepare analyses and policy recommendations on the international financial architecture, debt management, financing for development and the social dimension of macro-economic policy. A first paper has been published under the title "Towards a new international financial architecture".

- The regional commissions are represented through their coordinator in the UNDG.

- The Executive Secretaries are now invited to the weekly meetings of the Senior Management Group which is chaired by the Secretary-General and consists of Heads of UN entities. Because of the teleconferencing facilities in Geneva, the ECE Executive Secretary often represents his colleagues.

United Nations System Regional Inter-agency Meetings

8. The first Regional Inter-agency Coordination Meeting was held for the region covered by ECE, in Geneva on 9 February 1999. The meeting was chaired by the Deputy Secretary-General. It brought together representatives from the European Offices of some 20 United Nations specialized agencies, Funds and Programmes.

9. The overall purpose of the meeting was to conduct a review of cooperation mechanisms and arrangements existing at the regional level and to exchange views on areas for further cooperation, in order to improve the collective response by the UN system to the needs of the region.

10. The participants discussed existing mechanisms of coordination as well as the priority issues which need collective cooperation. It was agreed that dialogue at the regional level needed to be further developed in order for all organizations to collectively improve their common understanding of the region's needs, trends and challenges which would lead to a joint assessment of the economic and social situation. This is turn could lead to shared goals among the organizations and the identification of a coherent set of actions to be taken by them at the regional level to support those goals.

11. The meeting also underlined the rationale for developing regional consultations and activities. Indeed, there are problems which are inherently regional in nature and cannot be solved at country level, for example air pollution and border crossing. In addition, the regional approach, apart from providing a necessary modality to address regional concerns and problems, also brings to light, through exchange of experiences in regional fora, issues of common interest to several countries as well as disparities between groups of countries within the same region. This exchange, which can cover both policy issues and operational programmes, can contribute to the forging of intraregional linkages and promote a better integrated cohesion of the region as a whole.

12. The relationship between regional programmes and country programmes was also discussed. It was generally felt that both country programmes and regional programmes can benefit from and provide useful inputs to one another. For example, the normative work developed at the regional level (common or harmonized standards and guidelines) could be taken up and promoted in country level programmes. Consideration, at the regional level, of cross-sectoral issues and interdependencies between sectors could also contribute to adjustments of existing national programmes or development of new programmes in response to the collective assessment of the region's needs, trends and challenges. Conversely, successful country programmes can be discussed at the regional level with a view to replicating them in other countries or other parts of the region, with adjustment as necessary. The outcome of consultations in the framework of the resident coordinators system and UNDAF-related mechanisms could also provide useful inputs to the consultations at the regional level.

13. Regarding funding of activities, most agencies attending the meeting expressed their need for more resources. They stressed the proven advantage of the UN system in supporting intercountry activities such as harmonization of infrastructure networks, convergence of rules and regulations, border crossing, etc. The experience of some subregional groupings shows that financial institutions are more ready to provide the necessary funding for projects when they have been developed on the basis of intercountry cooperation.

14. The meeting further agreed that:

- a common assessment of the regional situation should be carried out in the forthcoming months, with the ECE acting as the facilitator and in close collaboration with a "core" group of agencies, funds and programmes whose activities focus on social and economic issues;

- this common assessment should lead to further defining of priority areas for cooperative efforts in the region. At this stage, some priority areas for interagency cooperation have already emerged among which: (i) reduction of disparities between and within countries of the region; (ii) policy and institutional capacity building in the transition economies; (iii) decreased vulnerability of the latter to external shocks; (iv) furthering the realization of human rights; (v) follow-up to global conferences; (vi) relations with civil society; and (vii) resource mobilization;

- this experience and its subsequent development (possible future cooperative actions) will be reviewed next year at a meeting to be chaired by the Deputy Secretary-General.

Cooperation with global UN entities

15. Joint activities and cooperation with other secretariat entities were already reported to the fifty-third session (document E/ECE/1362). The paragraphs below highlight developments in 1998.

United Nations Conference on Trade and Development (UNCTAD)

16. In the field of economic analysis, ECE has developed close cooperation with the Macroeconomic and Development Policies Branch of UNCTAD's Globalization and Development Strategies Division. UNCTAD draws on ECE for material concerning the European and especially the transition economies, and ECE relies on UNCTAD for data concerning the global context for the ECE economies. Both organizations benefit, like many others, from their participation in the LINK project which, for many years, has been gathering together the senior economists from governments and institutions to discuss economic forecasts and policy issues. In 1998, the ECE and UNCTAD secretariats produced a joint analysis of the Russian crisis for UNCTAD's Trade and Development Board, and starting in 1999 ECE will draft the section on transition economies for UNCTAD's annual Trade and Development Report. The Executive Secretaries participated in the Trade and Development Board's dialogue with the Second Committee, through video conferencing, on the impact of the Asian crisis in their respective regions.

17. In the area of trade facilitation the ECE secretariat has over the year confirmed and strengthened its close working relationship with UNCTAD. As requested at the Commission's fifty-third session, ECE Recommendation No.4 on National Trade Facilitation Organs has been redrafted and submitted to CEFACT for approval. The redrafted version, which was the result of a joint ECE/UNCTAD effort, ensures that there is no inconsistent approaches by the two organizations in this field. Further, ECE has actively participated in UNCTAD's conference on "Partners for Development" held in Lyons (France), in November 1998 as well as in various seminars and workshops. In addition, ECE has made a substantive contribution to the UNCTAD "Train for Trade" programme discussing ways and means for small and medium-sized companies to be included in the electronic commerce community.

United Nations Development Programme (UNDP)

18. Efforts to improve cooperation and coordination with UNDP are ongoing. In September 1998, the Executive Secretaries met with the heads of the Regional Bureaux in New York in order to discuss new terms of reference for the joint Task Force. A strategic compact for collaboration between UNDP and the regional commissions is currently being finalized. In addition to calling for the reactivation of the Task Force, this outlines mechanisms of collaboration for exchange of information band programming at the national, regional and interregional levels.

19. The Regional Bureau for Europe and the Commonwealth of Independent States of UNDP and the ECE, in collaboration with the Harvard University Center for International Development, organized on 8 December 1998, in New York, a dialogue on policy responses to the Russian crisis and recent developments in Latin America, and on reform of the global financial infrastructure. Follow-up activities have been envisaged in the form of country level follow up round tables.

20. Under the auspices of the Energy Efficiency 2000 Project, two projects funded by the UNDP/Global Environment Facility (US$ 2 to 3 million each) have been under implementation on the development in the energy efficiency demonstration zones of Gabrovo (Bulgaria) and Vladimir (Russian Federation). They are now being implemented through the UNDP offices in Moscow and Sofia. ECE has also provided technical assistance to the UNDP project on sustainable forestry management and reduction of adverse environmental impacts by using wood and wood residue resources for the production of heat power in Belarus.

Habitat

21. ECE work in the field of human settlements is structured according to the recommendations of the Habitat II Conference. The ECE Committee on Human

Settlements recognizes that upgrading living conditions of people in central and eastern Europe is one of the most formidable challenges in the ECE region on the eve of the new millennium. The governance in spatial planning, housing development and privatization was selected as an umbrella topic for human settlements activities in line with recommendations of the Habitat II Conference to strengthen local economies and democratic representative government by making public administration more transparent and accountable. The work of the Meeting of Officials on Land Administration to assist countries in transition to establish a system of real property administration, property rights legislation and related institutional framework is one of the key areas of the follow-up activities to the Conference where the ECE and Habitat cooperate and share experience.

22. In 1998, the ECE secretariat conducted a survey of the follow-up to the Habitat II Conference and implementation of the Habitat Agenda. The ECE is coordinating its activities with Habitat on participation in the round table discussion on partnerships for action towards sustainable consumption during the High Level Segment at the forthcoming seventh session of the Commission on Sustainable Development.

United Nations Environmental Programme (UNEP)

23. As requested at the Commission's fifty-third session, regular meetings are held between the ECE Environment and Human Settlements Division and the Regional Office for Europe of UNEP. The latest of these annual meetings was held in November 1998. At these meetings items for possible cooperation and measures to avoid overlap in efforts are assessed.

24. The Protocol on Persistent Organic Pollutants (POPs) to the ECE Convention on Long-Range Transboundary Air Pollution which was signed by Ministers at the Environment for Europe Conference in Aarhus, Denmark, in June 1998 is being used as a major input to the ongoing UNEP negotiations on a global agreement on the same item. ECE experts have taken part in global awareness raising activities organized by UNEP.

25. UNEP has shown interest in the ECE Convention on Access to Information, Public Participation in Decision-making and Access to Justice in Environmental Matters, adopted and signed at the Aarhus Conference, in order to initiate activities on a global level. In January 1999 this cooperation was discussed in Geneva with the Executive Director of UNEP and subsequently the Director of the ENHS Division made a presentation of the Convention at the High-level segment of the session of UNEP's Governing Council in Nairobi in February 1999.

26. ECE and UNEP are cooperating in the implementation of a project on environmental impact assessment in the CIS countries. The project will

contribute to the application of the provisions in the ECE Convention on Environmental Impact Assessment in a Transboundary Context and support accession to the Convention by CIS countries. In addition the project will create a basis for interstate cooperation on the EIA Convention in the subregion.

27. ECE is developing jointly with UNEP a strategy for compliance with the ECE Convention on the Protection and Use of Transboundary Watercourses and International Lakes. The project is also intended to draft guidelines on public participation in river basin management within the context of the Convention. The project report will be submitted to a Ministerial "World Water Forum" Conference to be held back to back with the second meeting of the Parties to the Convention in The Hague, Netherlands, in March 2000. The documentation to be produced by the project is, in addition, expected to give guidance to the interim implementation of the forthcoming Protocol to the Convention, on water and health, which will be presented for adoption and signature to the June 1999 London Ministerial Conference on Environment and Health.

28. Cooperation with UNEP has also started on the ECE Environmental Performance Review programme. UNEP provided a staff member for the EPRs on Ukraine and Croatia.

World Meteorological Organization (WMO)

29. The Cooperative Programme for Monitoring and Evaluation of the Long-range Transmission of Air Pollutants in Europe (EMEP), operating under the Convention on Long-range Transboundary Air Pollution, is implemented in cooperation with WMO. This scheme of cooperation has been in operation since the inception of the programme in the 1970s and contributes to the high scientific and technical level of the activities.

World Health Organization's Regional Office for Europe (WHO/EURO)

30. The Executive Body for the Convention on Long-range Transboundary Air Pollution has established a Joint Task Force on the Health Aspects of Air Pollution together with the European Centre for Environment and Health of WHO/EURO. The Task Force will prepare information as a contribution to facilitate decisions on possible further regulatory action on air pollution under the Convention.

31. The Committee on Environmental Policy is cooperating with WHO/EURO through a jointly established European Environment and Health Committee (EEHC), in the preparations for a third Ministerial Conference on Environment and Health which will take place in London from 16 to 18 June 1999. The Conference is expected to adopt a protocol on water-related diseases to the

ECE Convention on the Protection and Use of Transboundary Watercourses and International Lakes, a charter on transport, environment and health and a ministerial declaration. The Committee on Environmental Policy will analyse the Conference's outcome in September 1999 and cooperate/participate in possible joint follow-up activities in close cooperation with WHO/EURO.

World Intellectual Property Organization (WIPO)

32. ECE, under the auspices of the Working Party on International Contract Practices in Industry, held a Forum on the "Enforcement and Protection of Intellectual Property Rights in the Countries of Central and Eastern Europe and the CIS", on 26-27 October 1998, with the participation of WIPO as well as the WTO and EU. Over 250 persons participated. This Forum endorsed the need for follow-up in this area. If the CTIED approves the need for such follow-up action, ECE will request the active cooperation of WIPO.

Cooperation with the World Trade Organization (WTO)

33. Cooperation with WTO reached a new level of intensity in 1998/99 under the auspices of the Committee for Trade, Industry and Enterprise Development (CTIED). Firstly, in the trade facilitation area, ECE worked very closely with the WTO Market Access Division and contributed to all aspects of WTO's initiative regarding the facilitation of international trade. Secondly, the CTIED's work in standards and technical harmonization was presented to the WTO Committee on Technical Barriers to Trade (TBT) and to the TBT Symposium. Thirdly, the WTO secretariat (together with WIPO) cooperated with the CTIED in organizing the Investment Forum on the Protection of Intellectual Property Rights in the Transition Economies. Finally, ECE participated in the 1998 WTO Ministerial Council in the United States of America.

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IMPLEMENTATION OF THE REFORM: COOPERATION WITH EUROPEAN INSTITUTIONS AND PAN-EUROPEAN ORGANIZATIONS AND SUB-REGIONAL ORGANIZATIONS

Note by the Executive Secretary

• In line with the reform, the ECE has strengthened its working relationships on a sectoral basis with the other regional organizations and institutions working in the same areas. This sectoral cooperation proves to be successful in avoiding duplication and promoting joint undertakings, and it will therefore be actively pursued in the future.

• The ECE seeks also to reinforce its cooperation with the other pan-European organizations addressing issues of regional integration in fields complementary to ECE ones. Initiatives may need to be taken in order to further develop joint assessments and shared goals, which may lead to a common strategy and subsequent cooperative actions.

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1. The relations between the ECE and other organizations and institutions of global, regional and sub-regional character have inter alia been guided by the concern for more efficient use of resources and avoiding duplication and inconsistencies. Today, these relations have to take a new dimension to meet the global and regional challenges facing Europe: the global crisis, the transition process and the enlargement of the European Union. Pan-European cooperation is therefore more necessary than ever.

2. **The challenges...**

(i) The instability produced by the recent crises in the foreign exchange and capital markets, gradually transforming into a social crisis on an unprecedented scale, has called for a closer global partnership cooperation, based on shared strategic thinking and producing value added generated by synergy effects. In particular, the multidimensional character of the crisis calls for new approaches in growth policies, social development, governance, trade and finance.

(ii) In Europe, the transition process adds to the uncertainties created by the crisis. The difficulties of transition, an extremely complex and painful process of building democracy and market economy, have not been successfully overcome in many countries, thus contributing to lack of stability and aggravating the consequences of crises. A fundamental task for the European organizations and institutions is to seek a common response to transition problems.

(iii) The inclusive process of enlargement of the European Union is an important part of Europe's cohesion but, for many countries, the perspective of their accession to the EU is too distant an objective and opportunity to be used as a stimulus for change and growth. Completion of Europe, an historic and unprecedented enterprise, will happen only if the know-how and achievements of all those responsible are brought together and linked into a coherent strategy.

3. **... call for more interagency cooperation.** The transition process and the new phenomena challenging development in Europe, produced or exposed by crises, call for a new dimension of the cooperation between pan-European institutions. The needs of Europe could indeed be better served if guided by a common strategy emerging from the shared assessment of issues and problems, a stronger policy cohesion and concerted problem-solving activities. Within this framework, the specific functions of ECE in its areas of expertise (norm- and standard-setting, policy analysis and technical assistance) would be maximized while benefiting from the proven advantages of the other organizations involved. For each of the three above challenges, the

inter-institutional cooperation and the role of ECE could be shaped as follows:

(i) Roots of global crises, their character, their impact and their solution could be better analysed and explored through such cooperation. ECE has been strongly involved in the on-going debate on economic development and policy issues in the region, and is therefore able to contribute to a better understanding of factors and processes which are at the heart of pending crises and to setting the agenda for more lengthy national and regional dialogues on reforms and policies.

(ii) In view of the interdependencies between the economic, social and institutional aspects of the transition process, a broader dialogue among European institutions, addressing all these dimensions, would help to design more relevant policies particularly for institution and legal infrastructure building, law enforcement and sustained growth. The ECE is prepared to contribute its well-established expertise on economic and institutional challenges of transition to this debate.

(iii) Pursuing the objective of a united and integrated Europe is a process which requires good communication between those involved and respect for the work of partners. Along this line, the ECE will continue to intensify and strengthen its cooperation with other global, regional and sub-regional entities - a major direction already provided by the reform adopted by the Commission at its fiftieth anniversary in 1997.

4. Over the decades, the ECE member States have often manifested their farsightedness in undertaking actions which contribute to the unity of the European continent. With the entry into the new millennium, this unity is a goal to be actively pursued by member States in the three pan-European institutions, the OSCE, the Council of Europe and the ECE. The time has come to make this common goal explicit and to give it a strong political support. An initiative, at the highest political level, which would forge a common vision of Europe and assign the three pan-European institutions the task of achieving it in their respective areas of competence, would serve this purpose.

5. Similarly, the necessity of inter-institution cooperation is also found between the UN entities when it comes to applying in Europe the global objectives of the United Nations. A major conclusion of the Regional Interagency Meeting chaired in Geneva by the Deputy Secretary-General was precisely to underline the need for a common understanding of trends and for common goals for the UN entities active in the region. (See document E/ECE/1370)

6. The following paragraphs describe the efforts made to strengthen cooperation between ECE and regional or subregional entities and institutions along the lines set forth the Plan of Action and by the Commission at its fifty-second session. The emphasis put last year on cooperation in precise sectoral activities has proved to be fruitful and should be pursued.

I. COOPERATION WITH REGIONAL ENTITIES

Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe (OSCE)

7. Cooperation with the OSCE in areas related to the economic dimension of security has intensified. This is illustrated by two main events in 1998, the Brainstorming seminar on the economic dimension of the Charter on European Security (Geneva, November 1998) and the substantive contributions to the sixth OSCE Economic Forum (Prague, June 1998). In addition ECE contributed to workshops and seminars organized by OSCE.

8. The brainstorming seminar was organized by ECE at the initiative of the presidency of the OSCE and in consultation with the coordinator of OSCE economic and environmental activities. It brought together government officials and academics. Two main issues were discussed: the conceptual framework of security and the cooperation between OSCE and ECE. The seminar helped to improve understanding of the activities of the two organizations, the way they complement each other and how the cooperation could be further improved. On substance, it emerged from the meeting that there was no comprehensive theoretical framework linking economic variables to security and therefore no way to draw definite conclusions of early warning economic indicators. The best way to assess security risks in countries affected by tensions or crisis would be multidisciplinary fact finding missions including an economist.

9. ECE participated in the sixth OSCE Economic Forum and prepared a major background paper for each of the two segments of this meeting: the implementation of the participating States' commitments in the OSCE economic dimension; and energy security in the ECE/OSCE region.

10. ECE also participated in and provided a paper for the OSCE Conference on Economy, Social Security and Democracy (Minsk, Belarus, September 1998) and organized, in response to a recommendation by the OSCE Economic Forum, an energy efficiency business briefing Seminar on Commercial Bank Financing of Energy Efficiency Projects in Central and Eastern Europe (Prague, Czech Republic, January 1999).

11. ECE hosted the preparatory meeting to the Nantes Conference on subregional cooperation processes in Europe which is a follow-up to the Monaco

Conference on the same topic. The Conference will be organized by the Parliamentary Assembly of OSCE in partnership with the Parliamentary Assembly of the Council of Europe and ECE, and will take place in October 1999. The preparatory meeting agreed that the themes of the Nantes Conference will be: promoting the environment; energy security; social protection; and combatting corruption and criminality in business.

12. In addition, OSCE regularly uses the ECE Economic Survey of Europe which is widely disseminated at the annual OSCE Council and used as a background document for the discussions at its Economic Forum. Many of the activities falling under the auspices of the ECE Working Party on International Contract Practices in Industry are relevant to the work of OSCE in the economic dimension. ECE will continue to cooperate with OSCE in the development of projects under the SPECA initiative (see document E/ECE/1368).

Council of Europe

13. ECE has continued to cooperate closely with the Council of Europe. It hosted a meeting of the Committee on Economic Affairs and Development of the Parliamentary Assembly of the Council of Europe in Geneva to discuss the Economic Survey of Europe and a draft report on the activities of ECE to be submitted to the plenary session of the Parliamentary Assembly. On 26 May 1998, the Parliamentary Assembly endorsed the report which was very supportive of ECE activities. In future it would be useful if similar reports were focussed on more specific issues, in particular on conventions in discussion in Parliaments.

14. ECE participated in the 23rd Meeting of the Council's European Population Committee and coordinated preparations for the Regional Population Meeting held in Budapest in December 1998 at the invitation of the Government of Hungary. This meeting prepared a European contribution to the Special Session of the General Assembly and made recommendations for further research, policies and cooperation. The Conference of European Statistician will review the proposals that it may decide to implement.

15. A Parliamentary Assembly conference will take place in Copenhagen in May 1999 on "Seas as bridges: the potential for increased cooperation and development across Europe's seas". It will be organized by the Parliamentary Assembly of the Council of Europe in cooperation with ECE and with the support of the Parliamentary Assembly of the OSCE.

European Bank for Reconstruction and Development (EBRD)

16. The EBRD participates in the Build Operate Transfer Group under the Working Party on International Contract Practices in Industry and its legal

transition unit cooperates on the Terre Initiative with the Real Estate Advisory Group. EBRD uses data collected for the Economic Survey of Europe. It follows some SECI activities and finances a post in ECE to assist the CEI.

II. COOPERATION WITH INSTITUTIONS COVERING PART OF THE ECE REGION

Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development (OECD)

17. In the field of economic analysis close contacts have been maintained with the Head of the Non-Member Countries Division of OECD which deals with countries most of which are ECE transition economies. ECE regularly attended the meetings of the OECD Economic and Development Review Committee and participated in the OECD/World Bank Workshop on the Development of Fixed-Income Securities Markets in Transition Economies.

18. In the field of environment, the cooperation between the two organizations is broad and involves close intersecretariat relationships. A major field of cooperation is the environmental performance review programme where OECD experience is applied to a number of countries in transition within the ECE framework. In the case of Russia, there is currently a joint review, led by OECD. The Task Force for Central and Eastern Europe, serviced by the OECD secretariat, has the same geographical scope as that of ECE. Negotiations have been conducted on a secretariat level to ensure that necessary cooperation and transparency is secured in order to avoid duplication of efforts. In the area of Human Settlements the OECD work on spatial planning and urban governance issues is of particular interest to ECE.

20. Within the Energy Efficiency 2000 Project, the ECE Committees on Sustainable Energy and on Environmental Policy collaborated with the European Energy Charter, International Energy Agency (OECD) in the preparation of the European Energy Conservation Initiative for the Ministerial Conference on Environment for Europe held in Aarhus (Denmark) on 23-25 June 1998.

21. The ECE Working Party on Standardization of Perishable Produce and Quality Development has cooperated closely with the OECD Scheme for the Application of International Standards for Fruit and Vegetables. The OECD Scheme adopts UN/ECE standards and creates explanatory brochures based on them to facilitate their application. There are regular consultations between ECE and OECD, and participation of representatives at relevant meetings of both organizations. The need to streamline work on the adoption, dissemination and application of standards in this area is increasingly recognized and discussions between the relevant bodies of both organizations and their respective secretariats are well advanced.

22. OECD is an important partner of ECE in statistical cooperation. ECE relies heavily on data collected by OECD for its economic analysis of west

European and North American countries. In return ECE provides OECD with economic statistics for countries in transition and is strengthening its capacity in this regard. OECD is among the key intergovernmental organizations that actively participate in the Conference of European Statisticians, the plenary sessions of which are held alternately in the ECE and in Paris at OECD headquarters. Relationships between the two organizations are also well developed in the field of conceptual and methodological statistics and ECE organizes many meetings jointly with OECD.

22. As part of on-going cooperation with the OECD, during 1998 ECE contributed to seminars organized by the OECD'S Istanbul training centre for representatives from the CIS countries.

European Union (EU) and European Commission (EC)

23. While ECE has a wider geographical membership, as well as the experience, networks and experts for specific tasks in the region, the European Union and the European Commission have expanding membership and greater available funding for various projects. On the basis of this complementarity, collaborative activities in support of various dimensions of the transition processes in Eastern and Central Europe and in CIS countries have been developed. The most important area is assistance in introducing and implementing ECE's norms and standards throughout the region, norms and standards which become part of the acquis communautaire and are therefore of particular importance in the context of EU enlargement.

24. The European Commission continued to make a positive contribution to all aspects of ECE's activities. In the Committee for Trade, Industry and Enterprise Development, the EC has been particularly active in UN/CEFACT and provided a rapporteur on legal issues to the UN/CEFACT Legal Working Group. Within the WTO's informal discussions on trade facilitation, the EC was positive about ECE's work in this area. The EC also actively participated in the Forum on Intellectual Property Rights and generally provided active support to the ECE's trade and investment promotion activities.

25. In the Timber Committee, the EC took an active part in the Temperate and Boreal Forest Resource Assessment Project. Its Directorate General XVII presented the EU's energy policy during the last session of the Timber Committee. The EC joined ECE in preparing the annual questionnaire which was also done in cooperation with the Food and Agriculture Organization and the International Tropical Timber Organization.

26. The Statistical Office of the European Communities (Eurostat) is the main European organization with whom ECE needs to collaborate in the statistical field. The statistical work plans of Eurostat are integrated in the annual Joint Presentation of Work Programmes of all organizations having statistical

activities in the region. About a third of ECE statistical meetings in 1998 were organized jointly with Eurostat and a similar proportion are planned over the next two years. The ECE relies heavily on Eurostat for statistics on the EU countries and in return, Eurostat benefits from ECE data on countries in transition. Furthermore, Eurostat financially supports the participation of these countries in ECE statistical activities, thereby helping to alleviate deepening divergences in the region.

27. The EC is party to most ECE environmental Conventions and related Protocols; it signed the Aarhus Convention last year. It is worth noting the development of cooperation on Air Pollution in 1998. A Steering Group for the development of the EU acidification and ozone strategies, aiming at harmonization with the process under the ECE Convention on Long-range Transboundary Air Pollution, has been formed, consisting of members of EC, chairmen of bodies under the Convention and the ECE secretariat. The EC has increased its input into the work under the Convention and has made significant voluntary financial contributions to effect-oriented activities in 1998 and 1999. On air pollution monitoring the European Monitoring and Evaluation Programme (EMEP) under the Convention cooperates with the EC CORINAIR system, the European Environment Agency and associated topic centres on air quality and air emissions respectively.

28. Under the Convention on the Protection and Use of Transboundary Watercourses and International Lakes, cooperation between ECE and the European Commission focuses on the implementation of pilot projects on monitoring and assessment of transboundary rivers. Eight rivers in central and eastern Europe, which are shared by two or three countries in transition, are included. Financial assistance is being provided, inter alia, by the PHARE and TACIS programmes. The envisaged cooperation under the TACIS Interstate Programme will broaden the scope of the joint field projects to include the human health component.

29. The EU is a Contracting Party to a number of ECE legal instruments on transport and uses the ECE work in certain areas (e.g. construction of vehicles, transport of dangerous goods) as a basis for EU Directives. For its part, the ECE uses EU legislation in other areas as a basis for the development of its legal instruments on transport.

30. The Pan-European Transport Conferences, which have been organized by the EU in cooperation with other international organizations including ECE, address in particular the issue of region-wide transport infrastructure corridors. The follow-up to the third Conference (Helsinki, June 1997) has been undertaken jointly by the European Conference of Transport Ministers (ECMT), the EU and the ECE. An important follow-up to this Conference concerns Euro-Asian transport links and the ECE cooperated closely with the EU

as well as ESCAP in assisting the Russian Federation to organize the International Euro-Asian Conference on Transport (St. Petersburg, May 1998).

31. Work has been on-going on energy efficiency standards and labels in the context of the SACHA project supported by the EC SAVE programme within the framework of Energy Efficiency 2000 Project. Participating countries include Belarus, Bulgaria, Czech Republic, Germany, Hungary, Italy, Romania, Slovenia, and Ukraine.

32. The European Commission, through its Energy Centre in Katowice, cooperates and provides support to ECE activities relating to coal and thermal power, and certification of mining equipment and materials.

III. COOPERATION WITH UN ORGANIZATIONS

33. ECE cooperation with UN organizations active in the region is addressed in document E/ECE/1370.

IV. COOPERATION WITH SUBREGIONAL GROUPINGS AND INITIATIVES

34. It is interesting to note that two subregional groupings, namely the Central European Initiative and the Black Sea Economic Cooperation, asked ECE to provide them with an assessment of the trends in their respective geographical area. Nevertheless, the bulk of cooperation with subregional groupings is focussed on operational activities and therefore reported in document E/ECE/1368.

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REPORT OF THE GROUP OF EXPERTS ON THE PROGRAMME OF WORK

Background

1. The Group of Experts on the Programme of Work was established in accordance with the ECE Plan of Action, which was adopted by the Commission at its fifty-second session in 1997. The Group's mandate was:

(i) To examine the programmes of work of the PSBs and to advise on arbitration between the competing additional demands from PSBs when they imply significant shifts among these programmes;

(ii) To advise on how to adjust the programme of work according to possible changes in orientation, to anticipated changes in the level of resources for the next biennium or, in respect of the current biennium, to unexpected changes of such a magnitude that it would have a significant impact on the existing programme of work.

First Report to the Commission, December 1998

2. The Group of Experts on the Programme of Work (GEPW) met in November 1998 and elected Mr. Charles Moore as its Chairman. Having received the relevant information from the secretariat, the GEPW submitted a report to the Ad Hoc

Informal Meeting of the Commission held on 4 December 1998. The following recommendations which were submitted with the report, were adopted by the Commission:

(i) The system of prioritization should be maintained for the time being;

(ii) The Chairman should hold consultations with the Directors, Secretaries and Chairpersons of PSBs, and report back to the Group on whether the system of prioritization requires clarification and adaptation;

(iii) No change in the current resource allocation is necessary;

(iv) The Group would meet to discuss the allocation of resources in the event of an increase or decrease of resources at a later date;

(v) PSBs are encouraged to implement new activities from within their existing resource allocations;

(vi) The Group should meet on an ad hoc basis as necessary; and

(vii) A second report would be submitted by the Group to the Annual Session in May 1999.

Research on Prioritization

3. The Chairman of the Group, in close cooperation with the Office of the Executive Secretary (OES), subsequently met with Divisional Directors and PSB Secretaries in January 1999 to discuss the issue of prioritization (recommendation (ii) above). He also wrote to PSB Chairpersons directly, seeking their views. In all these contacts, it was made clear that there were two main objectives of the exercise: to identify problems arising from the first application of the Guidelines last year; and to consider ways of ensuring that each Committee submitted information to the secretariat in a comparable format in the prioritization exercise.

4. Prioritization is a necessary exercise which, if circumstances dictate, would allow the GEPW to make considered judgements on the overall direction of ECE's work within the available resource limits. It should not take up an unreasonable amount of the PSBs' time; nor should it be difficult for the secretariat to collate the information received from PSBs; nor should it be seen as an attempt by the GEPW to interfere with or to micro-manage the excellent work of PSBs. The GEPW could only make objective decisions on the allocation or redistribution of resources if the relevant information were provided to the secretariat.

5. During his consultations with the PSBs and the secretariat, the Chairman identified several difficulties arising from the initial application of the Guidelines in 1998. These were:

- some PSBs clearly believed that activities identified as "lower" priority would automatically be cut;

- the identification of "lower" priority activities also implied that the PSBs viewed those activities as less worthwhile than others;

- the smaller PSBs (Human Settlements, Timber and Sustainable Energy) had found it more difficult than others to prioritize at a level of activities which employ one staff member;

- some PSBs gave different priorities to separate elements of the same activity, or mixed elements of different activities;

- PSBs provided different levels of detail in different formats, making collation (by the secretariat) and comparison (by the GEPW) particularly difficult;

- some PSBs had held their annual sessions before the Guidelines were published; and

- the activities of some PSBs covered several different Ministries in each member State: the lack of strong horizontal policies towards the orientation of ECE's work (and sometimes a lack of coordination between and within the Ministries themselves) did not help PSBs to prioritize their work.

Conclusions and Recommendations

6. The Chairman concluded that the Guidelines were perhaps not as effective in practice as they had originally been thought to be. Having recently been through the process of reform, PSBs may have seen the application of the Guidelines as a first step by the GEPW towards reducing, or micro-managing, their activities. This would be entirely understandable, but the Chairman made clear in all his consultations that there was no hidden agenda. Indeed, he wanted to work closely with the PSBs and the secretariat to ensure that the mandate of the GEPW was carried out with complete transparency and cooperation. He concluded that it would be beneficial to revise the prioritization process, making it simpler and clearer for all concerned. He reported back to the GEPW on 29 January 1999, and recommended that a new system be put in place for prioritization.

7. The new system would introduce a proforma for individual PSBs, accompanied by an explanatory note. The proforma would ask for specific information regarding the "clusters" or main subject areas of activity. It would consist of a table of clustered activities, requiring PSBs to assign a priority level to each cluster, and to indicate the number of regular budget professional staff within the secretariat (excluding Divisional Directors) allocated to each cluster of activity. To ensure that the process was both cooperative and transparent, Divisional Directors and PSB Secretaries would be consulted on the clusters of activities to be listed in the proforma. The proforma would also ask PSBs to identify activity options in the event of an increase or decrease in the budget. This new system should have several advantages. It should:

- prove less onerous and time-consuming for PSBs;

- make it easier for the secretariat to collate the information in a comparable format;

- provide the GEPW with clear, concise and comparable information on which it can make objective decisions, if necessary, on the allocation or redistribution of resources; and

- further improve the relationship between the GEPW, the secretariat and the PSBs through consultation and cooperation.

8. PSBs would still be required to prioritize on a three-tier basis (higher, medium and lower priority). However, those PSBs accounting for less than 5% of ECE's overall budget - Human Settlements, Timber and Sustainable Energy - may prioritize their activities on a two-tier basis (higher and lower priority), if necessary. This would make the process of prioritization easier for those PSBs with small programmes of activity, but offers no other preferential status: the GEPW would still be able to view the overall direction of ECE's activities on a cross-sectoral and fully comparable basis.

9. The explanatory note would, in effect, replace the Guidelines as a self-standing document. It aims to offer a clear explanation of the new system, which is intended the reduce the burden on the PSBs and the secretariat. It also aims to clarify the responsibilities of each party (the PSB, the secretariat and the GEPW) in the prioritization process, and to emphasise the importance of work programme prioritization.

10. While it is envisaged that the explanatory note would be a self-standing document, the Chairman further recommended that he (or a representative of the GEPW) should attend the annual meetings between the Bureau of the Commission

and the individual Bureaux of PSBs. Other informal meetings between the PSB, the secretariat and the GEPW could be arranged as necessary.

11. The GEPW discussed the findings of the Chairman, and agreed on the recommendations with some amendments. These recommendations are summarised below, and are formally submitted to the Commission for consideration and adoption. The new Explanatory Note and a blank proforma, both of which have also been agreed by the GEPW, are contained in the Annex to this report. The revised system would be applied for the first time in the year 2000, namely the year in which the 2002-2003 programme budget will be submitted by the Executive Secretary to UN Headquarters.

Recommendations

- All PSB activities using ECE regular budget resources should be included in the prioritization exercise;

- The three-tier system of prioritization should be maintained, but PSBs which account for less than 5% of total ECE resources (Human Settlements, Timber and Sustainable Energy) may, if necessary, prioritize their activities on a two-tier basis;

- A proforma should be produced for individual PSBs to complete during the prioritization exercise;

- An explanatory note should be produced to accompany the new proforma; and

- The Chairman or a representative of the GEPW should attend the annual meetings between the Bureau of the Commission and the PSB Bureaux. Other informal meetings between the PSB and the GEPW could be arranged as necessary.

ANNEX

PRIORITIZATION: EXPLANATORY NOTE

1. Background

1.1 The Commission agreed, at its fifty-fourth session in May 1999, to revise the system of prioritization. It was also agreed that PSBs should prioritize their activities using a proforma, in preparation for the biennial programme budget submission. This would allow the GEPW to compare the activities of PSBs on a cross-sectoral basis, with information provided in similar formats.

1.2 This note explains the revised system, and offers guidance to PSBs for future reference. It outlines the roles and responsibilities of the GEPW, the Secretariat and the PSBs in the prioritization process; describes the individual sections of the proforma; and explains the procedure for preparing and completing the proforma.

2. Roles and Responsibilities

2.1 There are three main groups involved in the prioritization exercise: the Group of Experts on the Programme of Work (GEPW), the ECE secretariat (including the Office of the Executive Secretary and the Divisional Directors) and the individual PSBs (and their Bureaux). Each plays a specific and significant part in ensuring the effectiveness of the new system, which is designed to ensure that all three groups work together rather than individually.

Group of Experts on the Programme of Work

2.2 The GEPW was established in accordance with the ECE Plan of Action, which was adopted by the Commission at its fifty-second session in 1997. The Group's mandate is

(i) to examine the programmes of work of the PSBs and to advise on arbitration between the competing additional demands from PSBs when they imply significant shifts among these programmes;

(ii) to advise on how to adjust the programme of work according to possible changes in orientation, to anticipated changes in the level of resources for the next biennium or, in respect of the current biennium, to unexpected changes of such a magnitude that it would have a significant impact on the existing programme of work.

2.3 The GEPW is responsible for ensuring that the direction of ECE work concurs with the wishes of the individual member States. The overall orientation of ECE's activities can be altered by changing, as necessary, the resource allocation to each PSB. This may follow an increase or decrease in the total budgetary allocation. It may also follow a consensus among the member States to place more or less emphasis on individual areas of activity, with no impact on the total ECE resource base.

2.4 The GEPW was not established to supervise or to micro-manage the work of individual PSBs. It has no remit to make arbitrary decisions on resource allocations between PSBs. Any recommendation to redistribute resources between PSBs would only be put to the Commission after having consulted the relevant Divisional Directors. The Commission would then need to formally adopt the recommendations of the GEPW. Even then, it would be for the PSBs themselves to determine how a change in the level of their resources should be most effectively applied, since the experts on each Committee are best placed to decide which activities would benefit from, or be least harmed by, a change in the PSB resource allocation.

2.5 In consultation with the respective PSBs through Divisional Directors and PSB Secretaries (who would in turn consult the PSB Bureaux), the GEPW will determine the clusters of activities to be prioritized for each PSB.

2.6 The GEPW will meet in the Autumn preceding the submission of the budget narrative by the Executive Secretary. This meeting will determine, in the light of information contained in the proformas and any supplementary information submitted, whether it is necessary to recommend the allocation or redistribution of resources to or between the PSBs. The GEPW may also be convened on an ad hoc basis at the request of the Bureau of the Commission, the Chairman of the GEPW or the Executive Secretary. Individual member States may also formally request the Bureau or the Chairman of the GEPW to convene a meeting of the Group to discuss any other issues relevant to the mandate of the GEPW.

ECE secretariat

2.7 Divisional Directors and PSB Secretaries will be consulted on the clusters of activity to be prioritized on the proforma, which will be based on the structure of the programme of work established by the PSB. Divisional Directors will also be responsible for overseeing the prioritization exercise in the Committees for which they are responsible.

2.8 The Office of the Executive Secretary will supervise the prioritization exercise as a whole. It will also collate the completed proformas (with supplementary information if submitted) for consideration by the GEPW. It will advise the GEPW on budgetary and administrative matters in ECE that are relevant to the work of the GEPW, and it will convene and attend meetings between the GEPW and other parties (Bureaux of PSBs, Divisional Directors, PSB Chairpersons) as necessary.

PSBs and their Bureaux

2.9 The PSB Bureau should aim to present the Committee with a draft completed proforma for discussion and agreement at its annual session. It may request an informal meeting with the Chairman or a representative of the GEPW if any further clarification is required.

2.10 The PSB should ensure that the completed proforma meets the requirements of the GEPW. In addition, it may submit any supplementary information which the PSB wishes to draw to the attention of the GEPW.

3. The proforma

3.1 An example of the proforma is attached. It consists of two main sections: a prioritization table listing the clusters(or main subject areas) of activity for each PSB; and two boxes relating to the impact of a change in the level of staff resources.

3.2 On the prioritization table, PSBs should allocate a level of priority (Higher, Medium or Lower) to each cluster of activities identified on the proforma. Given their limited size, PSBs which account for less than 5% of total ECE resources (Human Settlements, Timber and Sustainable Energy) may, if necessary, prioritize on a two-tier basis (Higher or Lower). Each priority level must contain at least one cluster of activity. PSBs should also identify the number of regular budget Professional staff (excluding Divisional Directors) for each cluster of activities. This need not be a round number: a cluster of activities may, for example, cover 1.3 or 2.7 staff.

3.3 The two additional boxes on the proforma will ask the PSBs to consider the impact on their activities in the event of an addition or a reduction of one staff member. This will help the PSB to consider potential new areas of activity and the impact of a budget reduction. PSBs are encouraged to consider carrying out new activities from within their existing resource allocation, in which case prior reference to the GEPW

is not necessary. The GEPW need only be consulted if additional resources were required

4. Procedures in preparing and completing the Proforma

4.1 For each PSB, the Chairman of the GEPW would discuss the clusters of activity to be prioritized (and therefore placed in the proforma), with the PSB Secretary and the Divisional Director who would in turn consult their respective PSB Bureau.

4.2 Once the clusters of activities have been determined, the PSB will be asked to complete the proforma. Ideally, the Bureau of the PSB should complete the proforma in draft before submitting it to the Committee at its annual session in the budget submission year.

4.3 The prioritization table must be discussed and agreed by the Committee as a whole. For the boxes, in the absence of consensus, the Committee can submit (on supplementary pages if necessary) the different options expressed by member States.

4.4 The completed proforma, once agreed by the Committee, should be passed to the Office of the Executive Secretary for collation on behalf of the GEPW in advance of the submission by the Executive Secretary of the budget narrative.

5. Conclusion

5.1 The revised prioritization process is intended to be both cooperative and consultative. Any problems that are identified during the process should be discussed and resolved as soon as possible, to ensure that the end result is not affected. For that purpose, the GEPW will be available for consultation, and would welcome the opportunity to discuss or clarify the concerns of PSBs as necessary.

EXAMPLE PROFORMA

ECONOMIC COMMISSION FOR EUROPE

[Name of PSB] .....

SECTION 1: PRIORITIZATION

Please complete the following prioritization table. Each priority level (Higher, Medium or Lower) must contain at least one cluster of activities. The number of regular budget Professional staff (excluding the Divisional Director) must be shown against each cluster of activity eg 0.7, 1.4 etc.

No	Clusters (or Main Subject Areas) of Activities	Priority Level (H, M, L)	Regular Budget Professional Staff
1			
2			
3			
4			
5			

SECTION 2: ACTIVITY OPTIONS

With the addition of one extra staff member, what additional activities would the Committee consider?

With the reduction of one staff member, what activities would the Committee consider reducing?

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(Provisional agenda item 4)

MATTERS ARISING FROM THE WORK OF SUBSIDIARY BODIES REQUIRING DECISION BY THE COMMISSION

Note by the Executive Secretary

Justification for granting a standing character to the Meeting of Officials on Land Administration of the Committee on Human Settlements

- At its fifty-ninth session, the Committee on Human Settlements, considering the implications of the Plan of Action concerning PSBs and their related bodies, recommended that the Meeting of Officials on Land Administration (MOLA) be granted standing character.

- Accordingly, this proposal is submitted, with the required justification, for decision by the Commission.

GE.99- 20774

1. As indicated in the report of its fifty-ninth session, the Committee on Human Settlements, considering the implications of the Plan of Action concerning PSBs and their related bodies, recommended that the Meeting of Officials on Land Administration (MOLA) be granted standing character (ECE/HBP/110, paragraph 4 (c)(iii)). The justification for this proposal is as follows:

BACKGROUND

2. The Meeting of Officials on Land Administration was set up under the auspices of the Committee on Human Settlements in February 1996. It aims at promoting land administration through security of tenure, establishment of real estate markets in countries in transition, and modernization of land registration systems in the market economies. The Meeting works in the area of (a) legal rights in real property; (b) land administration (real property formation); (c) land information (land register); and (d) institutional issues.

3. The following parties are interested in this activity: (a) National government: in its administration, taxation, economic development, market information, and European harmonization; (b) Local government: in spatial planning, land valuation, land use, and environmental protection; (c) Companies and citizens: in security of property rights, access to housing through mortgage finance, market and investment opportunity, real property transfer.

4. Between its sessions, all work is supervised and guided by the Steering Group of MOLA consisting of representatives from Austria, Croatia, Denmark, Germany, Latvia, Netherlands, Norway, Poland, Russian Federation, Spain and the United Kingdom. Representatives of the World Bank, EU Phare Programme and US AID regularly participate in MOLA' activities and meetings of its Steering Group.

EXPERIENCE GAINED

5. The MOLA has gained extensive experience in promotion of privatization and effective real estate market through promotion of modern land registration systems in the ECE region. It represents a well-established network of land administration officials in Europe and North America. It organizes workshops, meetings with donors and lending organizations, prepares guidelines and policy papers. It operates by sending independent expert missions to ECE countries to give policy advice and recommendations on national programmes on land market development and real estate registration. These activities are being implemented in response to a high demand from the ECE member States. The MOLA's network, its activities and experience assist donor and lending organizations to better structure and coordinate their numerous and expensive

projects in countries in transition, on the basis of a clear identification of national problems and local needs.

RATIONALE FOR GRANTING A STANDING CHARACTER TO ECE WORK IN LAND ADMINISTRATION

6. The ECE is the only international forum where the issues of land administration are identified and addressed in a comprehensive manner at the regional level.

7. MOLA benefits from an extensive network of experts located in all parts of the region, which needs to be maintained in order to continue exchanging experiences and harmonizing rules and technology uses in this area.

8. Land information and administration systems have to be improved and modernized on a continuing basis. Particular attention is being paid to countries in transition which are engaged in building up new systems from the very beginning. On their part, western countries are moving from traditional to modern systems, which involves changes in computerization, legislation and institutional organization.

9. It thus appears that the establishment and modernization of land administration systems call for continuous exchange of experiences and cooperation among national experts of the entire region. In accordance with the Plan of Action, the Commission is requested to take a decision on the above proposal.